

The Dome – Prolog

“Got a minute, Jacob?”

“You’re the boss, Cal.”

“Take a look at this set of plans and let me know what you think.”

“What are they for?”

“They’re plans for a dome with a basement.”

“I’ll look, but I don’t know much about domes. Say, we supplied the shotcrete for that dome three years ago, is this related to that?”

“That’s where I got the idea, yes. A dome is the second strongest structure there is with a sphere being the strongest. According to FEMA, a properly constructed dome will withstand all natural disasters we’re likely to have here in Arizona, and is safe against a nuclear event unless it’s a direct or near hit.

“Why the basement?”

“Storage, odds and ends... you name it.”

“Does this have anything to do with what happened last September?”

“In a way, I suppose. Who would have thought that two aircraft could have brought down the towers?”

“Wait a minute, is this figure right? That’s thick concrete.”

“Double reinforced with steel and fiberglass fiber admixture. The concrete will be rated at 10,000 PSI. It has a 40 foot exterior radius with concrete floors at 9 foot intervals. The top floor will be storage space with a bare concrete floor. The second and third floors will be multiple bedrooms with ensuite baths.”

“How are you going to support those floors?”

“The floors will incorporate pre-stressed 10 inch I-beams resting on the center column which contains the stairwell. I’m waiting on an engineering report.”

“Next question; where do you plan on building this monstrosity?”

“You know those 3 sections I inherited between Phoenix and Tucson? The property is about 3 miles from I-10.”

“Totally self-contained?”

“That’s the plan.”

“What are these divisions shown in the basement?”

“That’s the generator room and the one next to it is the electrical/battery room. The smaller two next to it are armories. On the other side of the generator room is a storage room for POLs and spare parts.”

“What are POLs?”

“It’s an acronym for petroleum, oils and lubricants. The spare parts include filters, engine rebuild parts and replacement alternator heads plus alternator rebuild kits. I planned on using twin 50kw diesel generators. In addition we’ll add a 50kw wind turbine or the equivalent plus 50kw of photovoltaic panels.”

“What about diesel fuel?”

“Twin Containment Solutions 40k double-wall fiberglass diesel tanks, a 20k gasoline tank and a 10k kerosene tank. I checked them out and believe me, they’re not cheap.”

“Oh, I don’t know, they’ll probably be cheaper than their contents.”

“Good point.”

“Can you really afford this?”

“I guess that depends on how well the building boom continues. I sunk all of my retirement money in gold and silver since it’s near the lowest level it’s been in years. Cash wise, if I cash out my other investments and add in the insurance money from the policy I had on Carolyn, I have a good start.”

“That was a bummer Cal. Who would have thought she’d be shot and killed by some kid robbing a Circle K?”

“The funny part was we’d only had those insurance policies for about 18 months. For a while, I thought I’d have to sue to force them to pay off due to the double indemnity clause.”

“How’s that work? I thought it was only for accidents.”

“Accidents and murder where the beneficiary didn’t commit the murder are covered but suicides aren’t. Both our policies were large since we were planning on starting a family. Between the investments, excluding the precious metals, and the insurance benefits, I have just shy of 2 million for the project. Plus I have Dad’s gun collection since Mom

turned very anti-gun after Carolyn was shot. I would have had it eventually, but him dying of pancreatic cancer put me in charge of the firm and left her with his collection. She's been nagging me to remove her as a trustee."

"You plan on doing it all at once or in stages?"

"That will really depend on what the total package costs. I intend on using our construction division to handle the excavation, forming and basement pour. I thought I might contract the dome construction with us having a batch plant onsite to supply the shotcrete/gunite with the contractor supplying the airbag form, the equipment and labor to form the dome. I put it out for a bid to Monolithic Domes in Texas for the moment."

"I've heard of Monolithic and a company in Idaho... can't remember their name. Take care in who you select, Cal, often the lowest bidder isn't the best choice."

The Dome Chapter 1

Before his untimely death, my father had a class 3 FFL. He also had a trust set up that he sold firearms to. He also sold to several Law Enforcement Agencies. Since it was his second job, it was by appointment only. He carried a full line of Springfield Armory, Inc. products, Heckler and Koch products, Surefire products, Browning products in addition to several other brands. When he was in the Army, he was a Designated Marksman leading to him being partial to the M14 rifle. He urged me to get my FFL and help him with what little business he actually got. Additionally, I worked for the Ready Mix firm he owned.

He persuaded SA to build 6 Super Match actions and ship them to McMillan here in Phoenix to be glass bedded in their M3A standard clamp-bar elevator stocks. The basic actions were the SA9102 with the Parkerized Douglas premium air gauged custom heavy match barrels. These were the civilian version of his M21. In addition to those actions, he purchased 12 M1A Loaded models, SA9226. All 18 rifles eventually made their way into the trust, after he had them 'fine-tuned'.

The fine tuning included adding Harris bipods and Sadlak scope mounts to all 18 and Nightforce NXS 3.5-15x50 F1 riflescopes with the MLR2.0 reticles to the M21s. McMillan installed the bipods. Dad bought the SA slings in bulk to get the discount and ordered 30 of the Surefire legacy FA762K end mount suppressors with 18 FH762KM14 and 12 FH762-213S flashhider/suppressor adapters. He also ordered 12 Surefire legacy FA556-212 end mount suppressors with the FH556-212A flashhider adapters.

The extra 12 7.62 suppressors and 12 5.56 suppressors were held as inventory until he found select fire 5.56 and 7.62 rifles he liked. He passed on before he that happened. The 12 M1A Loadeds didn't get scopes, although it might have been cheaper. Instead, he selected EOTech holographic sights.

Dad favored the .45acp and Mom favored the Browning Hi-Power in 9mm. I had both along with spare threaded barrels with the Nielsen Device (muzzle booster) built into the suppressors. The trust had 6 Kimber Custom TLE II for the long range shooters with the M21s and 12 Taurus PT1911Bs for the M1A Loaded shooters. All had extended threaded barrels with barrel thread protectors. A while after he died, I ordered gun lights from Surefire.

Between the dome project and running the concrete business, the next three years saw me running up and down I-10 several times a week. Jacob ran the construction division for me. Monolithic Domes worked with me getting the dome laid out to my satisfaction and Jacob had a crew install the Swiss blast doors we got through Utah Shelter Systems. Two AV-300 filter systems were selected to ensure adequate ventilation. Jacob built an airlock using two of their largest double leaf doors at each opening. He included a decontamination shower and floor drain in the airlock, just in case.

I'll have to give it to Jacob, if I forgot to tell him something I wanted, I usually found he'd anticipated my every wish. For example, I'd overlooked a propane tank but he found a good used tank, had it tested and brought up to spec. Thirty thousand gallons of propane wasn't cheap. He said it was filled to capacity only because they'd buried it and it wouldn't overheat.

I selected Kohler 50REOZJB generators as they put out ~200 amps at full power. I told the Kohler representative I wanted a complete set of parts to rebuild each engine, 2 spare alternator heads and alternator repair parts. I think I shocked him when I told him I needed enough filters to run both generators for 60 months. Of course he recommended synthetic motor oil. I went with Castrol Tecton 15w-40 based on a story I'd read on one of the forums. The orders for both filters and oil were large enough that both Kohler and the oil distributor had to order in the amount I wanted.

Once we had the project done, I turned to filling the basement with long term storage foods. I hedged my bets and got basic foods like grains, beans, etc. plus something a bit more palatable from Emergency Essentials (Mountain House) and Nitro Pak. Five years for 7 people; the dome had 6 bedrooms, 1 king and 2 queens on the second floor plus 3 twins on the third floor. There were 2 gun vaults in the basement, one for the business firearms and a second for the trust firearms. The safe holding the tax stamps was in the trust vault. There is also a firearm safe in my den.

I caught a deal on Black Hills ammo during the run up to the 2008 elections before the price went through the roof and it was all sold out. Still, it did cost a bunch, even buying it wholesale. I bought 30,000 rounds of 175gr match BTHP and 60,000 rounds of 168gr Match BTHP in 7.62x51mm and 30,000 rounds of 68 grain heavy match BTHP 5.56x45mm. I added a pallet of Speer 200gr +P Gold Dot in .45acp and a pallet of 124gr +P Gold Dot in 9mm.

By mid-2008, I had the bug out location ready to go. When I tried to explain to Mom about having a place to go, just in case, she shined me on. The first question out of her mouth was whether or not I'd removed her as a trustee. I told her the attorney had the papers ready and all she had to do was sign them. She then informed me she met someone her age and if he'd get off the dime, she planned to marry him. Finally, she reminded me that I'd best notify the ATF of my changes of address to that place halfway to Tucson.

I'd already done that and had to go through an ATF inspection with them correcting their records from ours. After they left, I sat down with a cup of coffee and reflected what we'd accomplished over the past six plus years. First and foremost, we had a very secure bugout location less than an hour south of Phoenix. That self-same bug out location was fully stocked with pure air, a safe shelter, pure water, ample food stocks and a more than adequate means of protection plus all the extras.

In 2008 when I could get the HK416s and HK417s, I ordered 12 of each. It was now or never with housing starts dropping off. Each weapon was selected with the longest available barrel, ~20 inches. The initial order included 30 magazines per rifle and spare-parts kits for each rifle. Those suppressors Dad had bought and shelved worked without adjustment, including the adapters. I hurried up and ordered another 30,000 rounds of Black Hills 68gr heavy match BTHP 5.56x45mm and another 60,000 rounds of 168gr Match BTHP in 7.62x51mm.

While Beta-C made 100 round dual drum magazines for the M1As and H&K rifles, they were unreliable. A new company named XS Products was working on a highly reliable 50 round drum magazine but they were in the development stage. They were accepting pre-orders at a reasonable price and I ordered 24 for the Loadeds, the HK416s and HK417s. On top of that, 44Mag dot com had a good price on M1A magazines and I ordered 360 of the 25 round versions.

“Cal, got a minute?”

“What’s up, Jacob?”

“What did you buy for shotguns?”

“Crap. I meant to buy the Mossberg 590A1s and get the OKC bayonets for them.”

“Which model?”

“The 51663 Special Purpose.”

“I was looking at their 2008 catalog and they’ve changed the front sling attachment. They moved it to the barrel strap just behind the bayonet lug. Maybe it’s just as well that you waited. How many were you thinking about getting?”

“Six with slings, sidesaddles, butt cuffs and the bayonets. I’ve been evaluating shotgun shells and I think I’ll get the 3” Brenneke Black Magic slugs and 3” Remington Magnum Express buckshot in 00 and no. 4 buckshot.”

“That 3 inch stuff has quite the kick.”

“I heard. I don’t know why but I wouldn’t mind having some red flares and some of that “Frag 12 ammo.”

“Don’t get caught. Do you have any long range sniping rifles?”

“Yep, the 6 M21s.”

“That’s not what I meant. I was more thinking about a .338 Lapua Magnum or 50BMG. The Canadian military uses McMillan’s Tac-50. Some guy named Furlong made a hit at 2,430m.”

“Special ammo?”

“Sort of; they ran out of their regular ammo and he was using 750gr Hornady A-MAX match. His rifle had a Leupold Mark 4-16×40mm LR/T M1 riflescope. You’ve done business with McMillan before; maybe you should talk to them about a Tac-50.”

“What’s the ammo cost?”

“Maybe \$6 a round if you buy it 10 rounds at a time.”

I stopped by McMillan and they got started on the rifle. We discussed the accessories and I decided to get my own suppressor and transfer the whole kit and caboodle into the trust. I did get the Elite Iron they recommended, at wholesale, not retail. The hard part was acquiring the MUNS (AN/PVS-27 Magnum Universal Night Sight) to mount on the McCann Night Vision Rail since it cost as much as the rifle and was LEO and military only. The scope I selected was the Nightforce NXS 12-42×56mm with the mil dot reticle. I ordered 4,000 rounds of Hornady ammo, 20 cases, which weighed ~1,100 pounds.

I sort of had the world by the tail, although business was off a little both in the Ready Mix and the firearms business. I was still banking money even after Mom got her share of the profits from the Ready Mix business. She wanted nothing to do with what I made with the firearms business.

It had been quite some time since Carolyn was murdered and I was still young enough to want someone in my life. I hadn’t met anyone in church with any great appeal so I decided to hit the bar scene occasionally. Realizing that I had to be pretty careful, I was fairly laid back.

I think it was the fifth or sixth week when I saw one of the most beautiful women I had seen in years. She was 5’5-5’6, slender at 112-115 and had dark brown hair, almost black, hanging to her waist. She was a little fuller in the chest than Carolyn, maybe a C cup. Ginger had brown eyes and lashes a mile long. Topped off with a permanent smile, she was a sight to behold.

“Hi. I’m Cal. Would you permit me to buy you a drink?”

“Hi Cal, I’m Ginger. I shouldn’t but just this once, ok. A Rusty Nail?”

“Never heard of it; what’s in it?”

“It’s scotch and Drambuie. It’s definitely a sipping drink. Join me?”

“That sounds more powerful than my Silver Bullet.”

“I generally limit myself to one, except for special occasions.”

“Is this a special occasion?”

“Maybe. Single?”

“Widower; my wife was killed about 6 years ago in a holdup of a Circle K.”

“I didn’t live here back then.”

“Oh? Where are you from?”

“The St. Louis area. Six years ago I was just finishing my Doctoral degree program.”

“So, you’re a Doctor?”

“PhD in Economics. I teach here at ASU.”

“I only made it through High School. I started working at Dad’s Ready Mix business and later got involved in his firearms business. At the moment, business has dropped off due to the reduction in housing starts.”

“And the firearms business?”

“It’s a class 3 dealership dealing mostly in National Firearms Act weapons, full auto rifles, silencers and that sort of thing. May I ask if you’re pro or anti firearms?”

“Neither, I’m neutral. I didn’t bring mine but everyone in my family was taught firearms safety and learned to shoot. I only have 2 firearms, a Mini-14 Ranch rifle and a Browning Hi-Power in 9mm.”

“Those are the standard calibers used by the US military.”

“Maybe, but neither is the best choice. My father has a Springfield M1A and Mil Spec M1911 and they’re better firearms. I compensate by using 124gr +P Gold Dot in the Browning and Black Hills 60gr soft point and V-Max.”

“Those should work. I don’t see a wedding ring, are you single?”

“Divorced. We got married when we graduated with our Bachelors’ degrees. Just after I started my Doctoral program, I came home early and caught him in bed with an under-

graduate woman. I don't expect much but fidelity is high on my list. So do you live here in Phoenix?"

"At the moment, yes. I do have a second residence about halfway between Phoenix and Tucson, but it's an hour commute. I use that location for the firearms business since the business is low volume."

"I'd like to see that sometime."

"That could be arranged, tomorrow is Saturday."

"We just met."

"Do you believe in love at first sight?"

"Whoa, slow down hoss. I'll admit I'm attracted but that's it."

"It's mutual and I don't really believe in love at first sight anyway. You do have two things high on my list; you're attractive and educated. I took a few college classes but never went beyond those."

"ASU?"

"Maricopa County Community College. Not that a college education would have hurt but since Dad died, I run both the Ready Mix operation and the class 3 dealership."

"You don't seem old enough to have a dead parent; auto accident?"

"Pancreatic cancer and that's not the best way to go."

"I've heard about that, I'm sorry for your loss. Double loss, your wife and your father."

"Thank you Ginger, but that's spilt milk. Would you be interested in seeing my other home?"

"I'll chance it; let me write down my phone number and address."

"You didn't ask but I'm 31."

"And I'm 27. My last name is Scott; I reverted to my maiden name after the divorce."

"I'm Calvin Burgess. I'll write my phone and address on the back of my business card."

"Time?"

"Is 9 am too early?"

“Just about right. Jeans and boots?”

“Should be ok but bring a jacket and a rain coat.”

“How big is your acreage?”

“It’s more of an undeveloped ranch, 1,920 acres.”

“So, all you have is a ranch house?”

“Sort of; I let you decide for yourself tomorrow if it’s a ranch house or something else.”

I hadn’t stocked the bar at the dome and on the way home stopped at a liquor store and picked up a starting stock for the bar. They sold kegs and I reserved a keg of Coors and a second of Coors Light for the two spigot CO₂ beer dispenser.

I bought an assortment of liquor and liqueurs, 2 each of Bombay Sapphire Gin, Jack Daniel Single Barrel, Gentleman Jack, Jack Black, Maker’s Mark, Chivas Regal, Cuervo 1800, Courvoisier and Pisco plus single bottles of Grand Mariner, Benedictine, B&B, Drambuie and sweet and dry vermouth.

Mixers were club soda, Collins mix, ginger ale, Squirt, regular and diet Coke, Seven-up and whatever the guy said he sold a lot of. I paid for it all and told him I’d be by around 8:30 to pick up the kegs.

Next, I went to the grocery store and picked out some nice New York strips, filet minions, prawns, baking potatoes, a gallon of milk, butter, bread, dinner rolls... Heinz Shrimp Cocktail sauce, horseradish, Heinz Ketchup, mustard... French’s yellow and Grey Poupon, mayonnaise, etc. It was a full cart and I grabbed a bag of ice for my cooler for the trip down.

Was I trying to impress? You can bet your bippy, Ginger was good looking and intelligent. The food would be an initial test of her cooking abilities. All the beds in the dome were made and, except for the Master bedroom, topped with plastic to keep them clean. Jacob’s wife Jackie had done that for me when they’d been down to inspect the finished product. I’d managed to buy Sealy Commercial box springs and mattresses, the firmest available. You spend 1/3 of your life lying on your back, buy the very best. Check hotel and motel suppliers.

I can’t remember being this excited since we started the dome project. It came in under \$2 million even considering the things I’d overlooked, like the propane. The kitchen equipment was Viking for the most part with Fry Master getting a piece along with a couple of other commercial firms like Bunn, etc. I just happened to like Folgers Classic blend and had 300 48oz cans and a full assortment of Bigelow tea.

Despite having a dome and an impressive armory, I wasn't a Survivalist. I was most certainly a prepper of the first order. Being a class 3 dealer had certain advantages, as did the trust Dad had set up.

Dad had set me down after I started working for him at the Ready Mix and explained the facts of life about rifles. He said if it was semi-automatic or full auto, it had to have a gas piston as opposed to the direct gas impingement system. After Eugene Stoner left ArmaLite, Miller, Sullivan, and Dorchester had developed a gas piston system for the AR-18, an improved AR-15. While the AR-18 was never adopted as the standard service rifle of any nation, its production license was sold to companies in Japan and England. I later looked it up on Wiki and learned:

The AR-18's action was powered by a short-stroke gas piston above the barrel. The gas piston was of 3-piece design to facilitate disassembly, with a hollow forward section with 4 radial gas vent holes fitting around a stainless steel gas block projecting rearwards from the foresight housing. The gas was vented from the barrel and travelled via a vent through the foresight housing into the hollow front section of the piston, which caused it to move rearwards a short distance. The rear end of the piston emerged through the barrel extension to contact the forward face of the bolt carrier, causing it in turn to move rearwards. The bolt itself was of similar configuration to the AR-15 with 7 radial locking lugs engaging corresponding recesses in the barrel extension, and the extractor in place of the 8th lug. The bolt was moved into and out of the locked position via a cam pin that engaged a helical slot in the bolt carrier, which rode on two metal guide rods (each with its own return spring) instead of contacting the receiver walls, providing additional clearance for foreign matter entering the receiver.

Unlike the AR-15, the cocking handle fitted directly into a recess in the bolt carrier and reciprocated with it during firing, allowing the firer to force the breech closed or open if necessary. The cocking handle slot had a spring-loaded cover that could be closed by the user to prevent debris entering the receiver, and it would open automatically as the bolt carrier moved rearwards after the first shot. The recoil springs were housed within the receiver, differing from the AR-15 which housed its more elaborate buffer mechanism in the buttstock. The AR-18's compact design enabled the use of a side-folding stock with a hinging mechanism (that later proved to be less than adequately rigid).

The Dome Chapter 2

I picked up Ginger promptly at 9 am and we got on the freeway, picking up I-10 and heading south. She had an overnight bag. The back of my Suburban with the back seat folded down was crammed with my purchases of the previous evening and the 2 kegs I picked up on the way to pick her up. We engaged in the type of getting to know each other conversation that lasted all the way to the off ramp and the property. It finally dawned on me who she reminded me of, an actress who was the bad female lead in *G. I. Joe: The Rise of Cobra*, I think her name was Sienna Miller.

“That’s not a ranch house and it’s definitely something else. A dome?”

“It’s an above ground bomb shelter.”

“Let me guess, you’re a survivalist.”

“I’m a prepper of the first order. The government can go to the devil for all I care. What do you think about Obama winning the election?”

“He’s a first, that’s for sure. I didn’t vote for him. Maybe I wasn’t ready for our first black President and maybe I just don’t trust him over this ‘change’ he advocates.”

“I’m with you on both counts; some say he isn’t even an American.”

“Even if he isn’t, I doubt anyone will ever prove it to everyone’s satisfaction.”

“I have to unload before I can give you a tour. Some of these things need refrigeration and the kegs need to go in the dispenser to be connected to the CO₂ and settle down.”

“I’ll help.”

“I didn’t intend to put you to work.”

“I don’t mind and I see some of it is groceries. I assume it’s so we’ll have something to eat. Are you checking to see if I can cook?”

“I am not forward enough to say, ‘and she cooks too’.”

“Good, I’m not forward either, but did bring an overnight bag. I was wondering if we might be able to go to Tombstone.”

“We’d have to wait until tomorrow; it’s a 2 hour drive. Oh, I see the reason for the overnight bag. I hadn’t stocked the bar and did some shopping last night. I hope Chivas Regal is ok for a Rusty Nail.”

“It’s actually a tiny bit of overkill but will work just fine. Candy is dandy...?”

“That wasn’t my thinking but I will be able to offer you a mixed drink, draft beer or a soft drink. I got regular and diet Coke, Squirt, Seven-up and assorted mixes.”

“Wine?”

“Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Chardonnay and Chablis plus a half case of Krug Champagne... a little of everything major.”

“No Dom Pérignon or Cristal?”

“First date and all; that stuff is expensive, I checked!”

“At least you thought about it. Krug is decent Champagne.”

“I did buy good steaks and some prawns.”

“Trying to impress me?”

“A little.”

“It’s working so far.”

After we had everything put away, refrigerated and the kegs installed it was time for lunch. I had a choice of chicken salad, ham salad, tuna salad, ham, bologna and cheese slices.

“Lunch?”

“Yes please, I’m afraid I overslept and skipped breakfast.”

“I didn’t oversleep but had other stops and missed breakfast too. Sandwiches and chips ok? I like everything in the refrigerator so pick what you like and make double. If I don’t die, I’ll assume you can cook.”

“Mighty big assumption over a sandwich and chips.”

“We’ll do the full tour after lunch and decide on some way to occupy the afternoon. I thought about suggesting shooting. I have a 1,000 meter range which has stations at 100, 200, 300, 400, 500 and 1,000 meters plus a pistol range and skeet range with adjustable launchers.”

“Adjustable?”

“I can vary the speed, interval and the height.”

“I never shot skeet.”

“Want to learn?”

“Maybe, we’ll see.”

It had been a while since I’d shot skeet. I decided to stick with rifles and handguns unless Ginger brought it up. I got her an M21, an HK416, a Hi-Power and a Taurus PT1911B. All were suppressed but I brought along earmuffs anyway. She started in with HK and was shooting very well with Black Hills ammo. Then, she went to the M21.

“Ugh, this is heavy.”

“It’s a lot heavier than that H&K but it shoots a heavier bullet. Use the bipod and sight it in for 200 meters.”

It only took her 5 shots to sight in the Nightforce scope. I reached down and removed the scope and told her to sight in the iron sights at the same range. That took 10 shots. I swapped the two targets and told her to shoot a 5 shot group with iron sights, reinstall the scope and shoot a 5 shot group with the scope on the second target. I was watching through my 60 power spotting scope.

“How did I do?”

“Three quarters MOA on the iron sights and less than half a MOA with the scope.”

“No way.”

“I’ll go get the targets.”

“You’re right, the group with the iron sights in about $1\frac{3}{8}$ ” and the group with the scope is $\frac{3}{4}$ ”. How come? I’m not that good of a shot.”

“That rifle is the civilian version of the M21 used by the Army. Plus the suppressor tightens up the groups. On top of that you’re shooting Black Hills ammo, the most accurate available.”

“What’s with the selector on the first rifle I fired?”

“The rifle is select fire, semi and full auto.”

“Can I try it full auto?”

“Sure, but don’t be disappointed with your results.”

Of course at full auto the group opened up. She didn't say it, but she was disappointed. We moved on to the Hi-Power and the Taurus. She did better with the Hi-Power because she was used to it. On the other hand, she didn't do badly with the .45. She called it a day and we put the guns on the back seat and returned to the dome.

"We forgot to shoot skeet."

"I didn't bring it up because I'm a little rusty. Maybe another weekend?"

"Count on it. I might need a wheelbarrow to haul that M21 but it's accurate and I like it."

"If you get to the point where you're outshooting me with that rifle, you can keep it."

"No way, it must have cost a fortune."

"It did; I'm serious about that rifle. If and when you can outshoot me with that M21, it's yours."

"Does the same apply to all 4 guns?"

"Sure and I'll even throw in a shotgun with a bayonet."

"Why would anyone want a bayonet on a shotgun?"

"Ask the Marine Corps. The 590A1 was a special purpose shotgun developed for the Corps. The primary difference between the Model 500 and Model 590 is in the magazine tube design. The Model 500 magazines are closed at the muzzle end, and the barrel is held in place by bolting into a threaded hole at the end of the magazine tube. Model 590 magazines are designed to be opened at the muzzle end, and the barrels fit around the magazine tube and are held on by a nut at the end. The Model 500 magazine facilitates easy barrel changes, as the barrel bolt serves no function other than holding the barrel in place. The Model 590 magazine facilitates easy cleaning and parts replacement, as removing the nut allows removal of the magazine spring and follower.

"The Model 590 has a plastic trigger guard and safety and a standard barrel. The Model 590A1 has an aluminum trigger guard and safety, and a heavier barrel, intended for military use under extreme conditions and rough handling; the metal trigger guard was added in response to the 3443G materials requirements, and the heavy barrel was added at the request of the Navy. The 590A1 is generally sold through military and law enforcement channels, though in most jurisdictions the 18.5-inch (47 cm) and 20-inch (51 cm) models may be legally purchased by private persons."

"If the Marines use it, it makes some sense."

"It's not the only shotgun they use, but many prefer it."

“If you’ll show me my room, I’d like to get cleaned up.”

Ginger selected one of the queens and I removed the plastic coving from the bed. While she got cleaned up, I went to the kitchen and prepared the shrimp salads. I decided to cook the filets and started the oven to bake 2 medium sized potatoes. I had sour cream and butter and chopped some green onion tops for the potatoes, just in case.

Shortly after that, she came downstairs in a robe brushing her hair dry. I explained about the potatoes in the oven, the shrimp cocktails and the condiments for the potatoes. I also showed her the filets and she commented that I was going all out for a first date. When her hair was dry, she returned upstairs and I checked the potatoes. They were about 20 minutes out so I started the countertop gas grill. Just as I was ready to add the steaks, she returned and said “Medium”.

“Yeah, me too. This is the first time I’ve tried this grill so I’ll do it by the numbers.”

“What do you mean?”

“Seven minutes per side.”

“How long do they have to sit to reabsorb the juices?”

“About 4-5 minutes. I didn’t make a salad, but we do have surf and turf.”

“Is that an oops?”

“Only if you wanted a salad. Which wine do you want, Cabernet or Merlot?”

“Merlot.”

I set out the shrimp salads and the cocktail sauce. After turning the steaks, I checked the potatoes and they were done. I let them set in the oven while I got the condiments and the salt and pepper on the table. I slid 2 plates into the oven to warm while the filets finished up. I then pulled the plates and set the filets on them to reabsorb the juices and took out the potatoes and cut them open and pinched them. Then I served.

“Did you used to work in a restaurant?”

“No. Oh, the steps I took... economy of motion. Let me cut my steak first in case yours needs to cook longer. Nope, perfect medium.”

“Six jumbo shrimp?”

“Prawns... they were on sale and cheaper than the shrimp for what you got.”

“You seem to have a grasp of economics.”

“Only as it applies to some things I do. That’s one of the reasons we charge extra per yard on short loads of concrete. The truck, driver and time are fixed costs. When we get a short load, say 6 yards, we have to charge extra to cover the fixed costs. I didn’t fix too much did I?”

“No, I get around it if you just give me time. Tell me about your wife.”

“I don’t really know what to say. We were around 21 when we got married. Carolyn was about an inch taller than you, not quite as slender as you and had a more modest bust. We were thinking about starting a family and had taken the first step by getting large insurance policies in case something happened to one of us after the children came. She wasn’t really into firearms the way I am. She wasn’t anti-gun but she wouldn’t carry one.

“I don’t know for sure but that might have gotten her killed. They say sometimes the mere presence of a firearm prevents a crime. Do you carry?”

“They don’t like firearms on campus. I’m not opposed to the idea but I didn’t bring my rifle or pistol with me.”

“I could loan you a Hi-Power.”

“Let me think about it. You interrupted yourself when you ask if I carry. Please continue.”

“I don’t really know what else to say. She didn’t work outside of the home and kept a nice house. She wasn’t really a neat freak but the house was always clean. She did laundry on Mondays, major grocery shopping on Tuesdays, went to the library on Wednesdays, her quilting group on Thursdays, fill in grocery shopping on Fridays and had her weekends free.

“We usually did something on Saturday like a movie, picnic or something else. Sunday morning was church and the afternoon we just lazed around the house. Turnabout is fair play.”

“It’s different, he was jerk. Jack never hit me ‘cause Daddy would have shot, shoveled and shut up. The strange thing was that he was extremely jealous and berated me if I even looked at another guy. It seems the same didn’t apply to him. I later heard rumors that he had a string of undergrads he’d bedded. It caught up to him though, got one pregnant and her father didn’t take kindly to that. The father claimed Jack pulled a gun on him and he shot him in self-defense. Jack was terrified of guns so that doesn’t wash. Nobody asked me and I probably would have lied. So, Jack met a timely end.”

“We all have things in our past. I haven’t set foot in a church, excluding funerals, since I lost Carolyn and Dad.”

“Do you blame God?”

“Not really... it just isn't the same. We went every Sunday and I felt so alone. Actually I did go to church a few times before I stopped.”

“Couldn't find Miss Perfect?”

“Nope.”

“How do I compare?”

“I don't know, but uh, it's looking good so far.”

“I'd have to agree with that. How about a pot of coffee?”

“I'll get a can from the basement.”

“This place has a basement?”

“Yes, it is storage.”

“This I've got to see.”

“The steps are over here.”

“Why didn't you put a blast hatch in the floor and make the basement the shelter?”

“There isn't any room in the basement. It has a radius of 38' so the floor is ~4,536ft². With the 10' ceiling, it give a volume of ~45,360ft³. Very little of that space is wasted. The coffee is over there, grab a can.”

“What are you doing?”

“Getting the cleaning kit so I can clean the firearms.”

“I'll clean the ones I shot if you'll show me how.”

“Ok. We have to be very careful with the M21 since its glass bedded. I could never understand Springfield Armory's warning. 'This is especially true with National Match and Super Match rifles, whose actions are glass bedded in their stocks. Unnecessary removal promotes wear, sloppy fit, inaccuracy and defeats the purpose of the bedding. Please do not field strip your match rifle unless it is absolutely necessary.' How do you properly clean it without disassembly?”

“If I could offer an opinion, maybe they're suggesting to only disassemble it to clean it after it's been fired.”

“Yeah, maybe that’s it. They do comment about how to separate the action from the stock for National and Super Match rifles.”

“Wow, how many guns do you have?”

“Lots. They’re more in the other gun vault; this is the trust vault for the firearms we own. The other vault is the business vault so I don’t mix inventory with personal property.”

“Why?”

“The ATF doesn’t like the inventories mixed, I guess. That’s what Dad said. The class 3 log is with the class 3 inventory and the tax stamps are in a safe with the trust inventory.”

“Do you always go through the ATF on all transfers to the trust?”

“Absolutely. I’m not saying I’m required to, because Dad never said. It’s better to be safe than sorry because sorry is 10 years per count.”

“And you paid \$200 for every NFA item transferred?”

“Yep. Ready to make that coffee and clean the firearms?”

“How’s that work?”

“The trust is a corporation and at the moment, I’m the sole trustee. Trustees are permitted to handle the NFA items.”

“So if you married...?”

“My wife would become a trustee.”

“Want to get married?”

“WHAT?”

“I was joking.”

“Maybe in the future if it works out and I do the asking. I’m a little old fashioned.”

“Good, I think Daddy will like you.”

“How come?”

“You have a large ranch in Arizona with a dome home, several tons of food, guns out the yin-yang and two business operations. What’s not to like?”

“I don’t care about your father; I’m concerned about what you think.”

“You’re growing on me.”

“After one date?”

“We could count tomorrow as a second date.”

“The filters are in the cupboard next to the Bunn coffee maker. There’s a scoop I generally use and I like 3 rounded scoops.”

I started on the handguns since she knew how to do the Browning and had her observe the takedown of the Taurus. It was slightly different from the M1911 and one needed a tool to depress the lock holding the barrel bushing in place. After that, the takedown was standard. I disassembled both my handguns and started with spray CLP and a gun cloth. Next, I soaked a bore snake with CLP and ran it through the barrel until it came out dry. Once I had both handguns reassembled, I started on the HK416, saving the M21 for last.

Ginger eventually caught up to me because I waited on the M21 until she was ready. I demonstrated how to remove the action from the stock and disassembled the action. With the parts laid out on a towel, I started cleaning each part and lubing where necessary, primarily the safety mechanism which was stiff on new firearms. I’d tried lithium grease the first time but had better results with graphite. After we had the rifles reassembled, we cleaned the gas piston, making certain it was dry but there was a fine coat of lithium grease on the threads.

After we finished, had the guns stored in the upstairs gun safe, drank most of the coffee and cleaned up, she said, “I’ll take that drink now.”

“Rusty Nail?”

“Can you do a Daiquiri?”

“Sorry, I didn’t get the ingredients.”

“Ok, make it a Rusty Nail.”

“Now that I can do. I’ll get some ice and you can mix it to suit yourself.”

“Actually, I generally drink Johnny Walker Green label when I’m drinking straight scotch.”

“I take it you don’t drink it often.”

“So you priced it?”

“Their blue label runs \$200 a bottle. The name is Calvin Burgess, not James Bond. I’ll get some Myers Rum and Bacardi Superior and Select. I’m sure the liquor store can help me with the selections. I can see I need a bartender’s guide and a better assortment of glassware.”

“Ask a bartender where they get their glassware, that’s the easiest way to find out.”

The Dome Chapter 3

Darn, she's hot. I wonder how she would react if I knocked on her door after bedtime. Nah, I'd better not, no sense in messing up what could prove to be a good thing.

This is the first man I've met since Jack that's really impressed me. For 2¢ I'd join him in his bedroom. But I think he's looking for a lady in his life, not some tramp that would sleep with him the first chance she got. I'd better cool my heels and let the relationship develop naturally. I do believe he's impressed with me almost as much as I'm impressed with him. I mean he bought a fancy dinner and a ton of booze. I'll bet the next time I come down he'll be able to make any drink I ask for.

I'd better take her suggestion about the barware and get a better selection of liquor and liqueurs. There is Galliano, Frangelico, Bailey's Irish Crème, Kahlúa and I'm getting a headache trying to figure it out. I'll just buy one of everything, it's only money. Some stores might not carry some things so I think I'd better hit several.

"Did you enjoy dinner?"

"Do you have to ask? I'm actually happy you didn't get the makings for a lettuce salad; it would have been too much to eat in one setting. I barely got around what you did prepare."

"I was afraid I overdid. You don't get a figure like yours eating as much as you did."

"Six shrimp or 4 prawns probably would have been more my speed but it was very, very good. You surprised me with cooking those filets by the numbers; I've never heard of doing it that way."

"They say practice makes perfect and I'll have to admit I wasn't familiar with the grill and took a chance."

"I suppose I'd better go to bed so I'm fresh for our trip to Tombstone tomorrow."

"I'll be right behind you as soon as I get the dishes in the dishwasher and wipe down the grill."

"I can do that."

"You're company and company doesn't do the cleanup."

"Ok, this time. Next time I help."

Next time? That answers several questions. Yee haw!

“I hope you like waffles. I have bacon and sausage, you choose.”

“Sausage.”

“It will be about 20 minutes.”

“That’s just about right, I’ll get dressed.”

I set out a Teflon coated frying pan and started the Jimmy Dean sausage on a slow fire. I was pretty much a creature of habit. I liked Jimmy Dean ground sausage and Hormel thick sliced bacon. I much preferred the brown eggs over the white eggs because that was what I had been raised on. Mom was a fanatic when it came to Belgian waffles and naturally I had a Belgian waffle iron. I started the first waffle when the sausage was about half done so the sausage would be freshly done when the second waffle was done.

I had already started the oven preheating to keep the waffles warm. The Vermont maple syrup cost more but it tasted better. Mom always used Aunt Jemima. Carolyn wouldn’t eat anything except the Vermont maple syrup. I had the second waffle cooking and just about done when the sausage was finished. I put it on a warmed plate and pulled a warmed plate for her waffle.

“Oh, Belgian waffles, that’s even better.”

“Be careful, I warmed the plate. The syrup I warmed is Vermont maple syrup, I hope you like it.”

“I’ve never had it. I always bought Aunt Jemima because the Vermont maple syrup was so expensive. Um, this has to be Jimmy Dean sausage.”

“It is. And I always use those brown eggs.”

“First class all the way.”

“It’s just regular butter.”

“Butter is butter.”

“I started a third waffle. I usually eat about one and one half.”

“I don’t know why I’m hungry this morning after the dinner you fixed. Split it?”

“We can do that.”

“You’re going to make me fat.”

“You don’t eat like this?”

“Quantity wise, yes, quality wise, no.”

“But, your hat is a Stetson.”

“And it should last a lifetime.”

“There is that.”

“I’ll put the second waffle on a plate to keep it warm.”

“I’m ready for the second half.”

“So you are. Coffee okay?”

“It’s Folgers.”

“Not too strong?”

“Just about right.”

“You’re too easy to please.”

“More syrup?”

“Sorry.”

“Don’t be. It’s better warm and I can’t believe how good the Vermont syrup is.”

“I aim to please.”

“You’re batting 600.”

“Only 600?”

“Nobody is perfect.”

After we’d finished eating, I got up and opened the dishwasher so I could load the dishes after I rinsed them off. I no sooner had the water running than Ginger began to hand me the dishes one at a time. When she was handing me the flatware, our hands

bumped and it was like I'd been struck by lightning. We both jerked our hands back and were staring at each other.

"Did you feel that?"

"It felt like lightning."

"Last night I talked myself out of spending the night in your bedroom."

"Funny, I had a similar thought."

"Well, what are we waiting for?"

"Are you sure?"

"Positive."

"I may be a little out of practice."

"Me too, but it's not something one forgets."

"What about Tombstone?"

"It will be there next weekend."

"Yeah, huh?"

We spent a very pleasant Sunday getting to know each other much, much better. Ginger might have been a bit shorter and had fuller bust but she had ten times the energy Carolyn ever had and none of the inhibitions. We finally ran out of energy around 4pm.

"I never thought this would have come from a first date."

"Second date, Saturday was our first date. Is it okay if I pick out the rings?"

"And you told me to slow down?"

"Sometimes something is just perfect and you know to grab on and hold on for all it's worth."

"I'm a bit old fashioned about some things. Ginger, will you marry me?"

"Absolutely, positively. How long does it take to get a license?"

"I don't have any idea. We'll just have to play it by ear."

“I’m going to get a shower and get ready for round two.”

“I guess I’d better do the same.”

“I’ll wash your back if you’ll wash mine.”

“Darn, I’m glad I had the oversized showers put in.”

On Monday we applied for a marriage license and looked for rings. Ginger bought the wedding bands and I bought the engagement ring. Due to schedule conflicts we ended up postponing the marriage ceremony until Friday. It also gave us time to reconsider in case of cold feet. I got Jacob to stand up with me and Ginger persuaded a fellow Professor (female) to stand up with her. We had decided on a Justice of Peace to perform the ceremony and both showed up 30 minutes early. The elapsed time was 35 minutes including 30 minutes of waiting time.

“How about we let our apartments go and move to the dome?”

“That’s about an hour commute.”

“With what we save in rent, we’ll probably be money ahead. It’s not like you’re short on diesel or gasoline. I think I’ll keep my SUV since you have a 6 stall garage. We can move anything we can’t live without over the weekend or the following. I’ll call my folks and let them know we got married. They will no doubt want to meet you but since they winter in Phoenix, they’ll probably wait. Daddy can bring down my rifle and pistol when they come down.”

“That miserable excuse of an apartment I have is on month to month and except for my clothes and a few possessions the furnishings are junk. I think I’ll have Goodwill clean it out. I can hire a cleaning service to clean it up after that and get my deposit back.”

“My apartment is a little better than that, but aside from my clothing, my stereo, big screen TV and mementos, there’s nothing I want. Maybe you can get a deal on cleaning up both.”

“I’m not rich but I’m certainly not poor. I can spring for both.”

“I knew I married you for a good reason.”

“I thought it was because of my staying power.”

“That too.”

I dropped her off to pack her suitcases and head to my apartment to do the same. We met back up about 90 minutes later and headed toward Tucson. We managed to visit the entire drive and learned even more about each other, mainly likes and dislikes. I'd shopped the liquor stores during the week and I think I had one of every kind in liqueurs and at least two of every kind of liquor. I'd made a trip down mid-week to finish stocking the bar. It looked like a lifetime supply.

On Thursday night I'd done the grocery shopping and when we went down Friday evening my 250 quart cooler was full. I'd called ahead on the meat and had a dozen New York strips, a dozen filets and 20 pounds of 8% ground beef in one pound packages. I also picked up a 20 pound bag of baking potatoes from Costco, and a 10 pound bag of red potatoes. I got an assortment of salad dressings, croutons, cheese, bacon bits and 3 premixed bags of lettuce. I didn't really like the premixed stuff because of the chemicals but a healthy dose of water would remove most of it.

So, aside from my 3 suitcases and cooler and the odds and ends groceries the back of the Suburban was relatively empty. Ginger had 3 suitcases and a makeup case. We'd come back up on Saturday, maybe, and move the first load of possessions. I was thinking maybe a small U-Haul and she was thinking a large U-Haul.

After we arrived, the first issue that came up was something to eat. She saw the ground beef and whipped up a meatloaf with baked potatoes and lettuce salad. I unloaded the Suburban and got instructions on where to put her things. The suitcases went into the Master bedroom but she told me she'd unpack them. After dinner, I cleaned up the kitchen while she unpacked her clothing.

Apparently Ginger was big fan of Victoria's Secrets. Her night wear left nothing to the imagination and was all silk and I mean even her hose was silk... thigh tops with garters. She caught me looking and told me she didn't own anything that wasn't silk, except for her western wear. It may cost more but was extremely durable. I noticed a couple of ball gowns and made a note to pick up black tie and white tie tuxedos.

I was tired and more than ready for a drink and asked her what she wanted.

"Jack Black and Squirt."

"Come here and see how well the bar is stocked."

"I noticed. Nonetheless I'm in the mood for Jack Black and Squirt, tall."

"Is that what you drink the most of?"

"Most of the time, yes."

"Remind me to pick up 2 cases of Jack Black and 6 cases of Squirt."

The Playboy Clubs poured 12 ounce drinks with 1½ ounces of liquor and I felt safe doing the same.

“My period is due to start mid-week so after we have our drinks, we better shower and consummate our marriage. I’m one of those who avoid sex when I’m on my period, it’s just too messy. Thankfully they never run over 7 days and usually 6.”

“I don’t have any supplies.”

“I do and we’re going back to Phoenix tomorrow and I’ll pick up a larger than normal stock of Tampax and Always Maxi-pads and party-liners. I might as well get more KY lubricant while I’m at it. Do you want condoms?”

“You might pick up a couple of boxes. Pick whatever you want.”

“What size?”

“Whatever you think.”

“Okay, large. Choice of brands?”

“I suppose Trojans would be okay.”

“Two boxes or a gross?”

“I didn’t know they came by the gross.”

“Well, I always bought them by the dozen but they have a shelf life and I can’t begin to tell you how many boxes of expired condoms I’ve discarded. Never found anyone I wanted to share that with.”

“I didn’t either.”

“I could tell.”

We finished our drinks and washed each other’s backs. While she was drying her hair, I changed the bedding in the Master bedroom and the guest room she used the previous weekend. I just added the bedding to the basket of dirty laundry.

“How long did it take you to grow your hair that long?”

“It’s about 15” long and has taken years. I periodically have a beauty shop trim the split ends. And it’s my natural color.”

“I noticed. How do you trim you know?”

“I use a moustache trimmer. It keeps the hair reasonably short and eliminates odors. Give me a few of minutes and I’ll be ready.”

When she returned, she was carrying something.

“Okay, do you know what this is?”

“A personal massager?”

“That’s one name for it. You get me started off and I’ll take over from there.”

Over the course of the evening I learned about the personal massager, and why she bought the KY lubricant. This was going to be very interesting. After using the KY lubricant, she’d excuse herself, retuning in a few minutes. We called for a break at midnight due to exhaustion. We then curled up and slept like we were dead.

The next morning I woke to the smell of freshly brewed Folgers.

“How about biscuits, sausage gravy and eggs to order.”

“I can do that, I need my strength.”

“Sure couldn’t tell that last night.”

“You aren’t sore?”

“Why should I be, I had the KY lubricant. That said we’d better slow down before we kill ourselves from exhaustion.”

We were slow getting around and showered after breakfast. She said she called her parents and they decided to wait to come down until their regular time, October 1st. Both had a million questions and she’d only given them the high points like my age, that I was a widower, ran 2 businesses and so forth.

“Now, I have question. Have you ever given any thought to ranching? With the proper irrigation, you could grow a lot of grass and raise beef. Your firearms business is based here and you could sell the Ready Mix business to raise the necessary capital.”

“I only own half the Ready Mix business and Mom the other half. She’s not active in the business but gets half the profits.”

“How well do the two of you get along?”

“At the moment, not that well. After Carolyn was murdered she wanted nothing to do with the firearms business and eventually we had her removed as a trustee. In fact the last time I talked to her she said she was contemplating getting remarried. I haven’t talked to her in months... no, make that over a year. After the tax returns are filed, I simply make a direct deposit in her checking account and mail her a copy of the income statement, balance sheet and tax return. It’s a corporation and she doesn’t even have to sign the tax return.”

“If you decide it’s something you might be interested in, perhaps you should contact her and discuss the matter.”

“I’ll do that before we drive up.”

“I told you I was from the St. Louis area. Did you assume I was a city girl?”

“I guess maybe I did, why do you ask?”

“I’m a farm girl, born and raised. Daddy farms a section raising grains and livestock. We have beef, dairy, hogs and chickens. Mom taught me canning and sewing. What I didn’t learn about cooking in High School Home Economics, she taught me. I can hold my own with the best of them. And don’t you dare say ‘and she cooks too’.”

“Wow.”

“Wow what?”

“Just wow, you’re full of surprises.”

“Have you ever tasted home canned beef?”

“Never.”

“Mister, are you in for a surprise.”

“Let me give Mom a ring.”

“Good morning Mom... No, I didn’t fall off the face of the earth... Well, I got married this past Friday... Ginger and I think you’ll really like her... Mom it’s been six years... Oh, you did, when... then why are you on my case for doing the same thing... You married who? But he’s a competitor... Do you think he’d be interested in buying my share of the Ready Mix... Oh he has... Why didn’t you let me know... I’m thinking about developing the ranch and maybe raising cattle... No, I don’t know anything about the livestock business but Ginger does... outside of St. Louis... No, she has a PhD and teaches Economics at ASU... Yes we’re coming up today to move a few things... Oh, I built a home on the ranch... Actually I did build that dome we discussed... Well, you still have

a place if the need arises... Okay, we'll do lunch... Which Perkins... Got it, Apache Junction near the SAS store... Okay, one o'clock. Bye."

"Did you follow that?"

"Do I need to change?"

"You look just fine and Perkins doesn't have a dress code. If we can come to terms, her new husband is interested in buying me out. I always thought he was an idiot and this pretty much proves it, the way business has been falling off."

"I didn't think to ask. This solitaire is something to behold and huge. How much did it set you back?"

"That's 1.01 carat flawless color D in a perfect round brilliant cut investment grade diamond. I paid for it in US gold Eagles that I bought in 2002. It cost more than a pound."

"I'm almost afraid to wear it."

"Wear it today at least, I want to see the expression Mom's face when you show it to her."

"You're awful."

"Sometimes, I can be. One of the reasons I lived in one bedroom dump was that it allowed me to cut my expenses to the bone. Sure, the price of gold has gone up since 2002 but I just kept buying in reduced quantities as the price rose. Plus my retirement is in silver and gold US Eagles."

"You're rich?"

"Comfortable before I met you. Now, I'm rich with you in my life."

"We'll have to keep our precious metals separate since what one owns before marriage isn't community property in most cases. Great minds think alike and I've been buying gold and silver since I started teaching at ASU."

"You make that much?"

"An Associate Professor earns good money."

"You're tenured?"

"For the last year and a half. I did 4 years as an Assistant Professor and was tenured in the minimum permitted time."

On the way up, I thought about the ranch. It was 2 miles wide by 1½ miles deep. The math was simple, 7 miles. I knew that hog wire came in 330' rolls and barbed wire in 1,320' spools. Two strands of barbed wire for 7 miles meant 56 spools of barbed wire and if I used hog wire on the whole distance, it would take 112 rolls. I also knew that hog wire cost a lot more than barbed wire. Maybe the solution was to only fence a small area for hogs and run 3 or 4 strands of barbed wire for the cattle. If Ginger wanted horses, we could fence 40 acres or so with wooden fences or even horse fence it they made such a thing. So, if we fenced 80 acres for horses and skipped the hog wire it should about even out. I had a lot to learn.

"Mom, Ginger... Ginger, my mother Marilyn. Fred, Ginger... Ginger, Fred Logan."

"Would you look at that rock! Are you sure you haven't been dipping into corporate funds, Calvin?"

"No Mom and you know we have the books audited. You've seen that dump I lived in. If you don't spend your money, you have it when you want to buy something nice."

"Selling many firearms?"

"Haven't sold many since I moved the business to the ranch and I sold those to the trust. The only reason I'm keeping the class 3 license is to acquire more firearms for the trust."

"How's business been Cal?"

"You should know Fred, housing starts are off. We're still profitable at the moment."

"Your mother said you might be interest in selling."

"Only if I get what my half is worth. You'll have to work your own deal with Mom."

"I was thinking 500 for your half."

"You're kidding, right? A million."

"You can't be serious with the business the way it has been."

"You not only get the assets and the goodwill, you pick up a good customer list."

"Six."

"Nine fifty."

“Seven is about as far as I can go.”

“Nine.”

“Split the difference at 800?”

“You have a deal at 800. Have your attorney draw up the papers and give them to my attorney to look over.”

“I’ll need a covenant.”

“Not a problem, I’m switching to ranching.”

I didn’t bother to tell him I would have accepted 750.

The Dome Chapter 4

“How are you going to do that Calvin, that’s bare desert?”

“Fence it and irrigate. We should be able to grow ample hay once we have water. We’ll fence 80 acres specifically for horses and hogs and the remainder of that section minus the 20 acre homestead for cattle grazing. That will leave 2 sections to grow hay and what we don’t use, we can sell.”

“Are you going to do dairy?”

“Marilyn, we’ll probably only keep one Black Angus cow for milking and dry up the rest when the calves are weaned. We’ll probably raise maybe 120 Rhode Island Reds for eggs and meat.”

“You teach; where will you find the time?”

“I’ll be resigning at the end of the school year. One person can’t handle a ranch that size. My father raised cattle, dairy, hogs and chickens. My brother and I were regular field hands during the summer except when I was helping my mother with canning.”

“I suppose you learned to shoot too.”

“Mom, she’s not Annie Oakley yet, but I have high hopes.”

“You know, I’ve suddenly lost my appetite. Ready to go Fred?”

“But...”

“Now, Fred.”

“My attorney will draw up the papers and get them to your attorney Cal. I’m sorry about lunch, but you know your mother.”

“Yes Fred, I do know my mother.”

“What’s that supposed to mean Calvin?”

“Nothing Mom, just go.”

“Well, I never...”

“No, probably not.”

"I see what you mean about how you get along with your mother. I'm hungry; I think I'll have the Club sandwich and fries."

"I'll have the same. Let me flag the waitress."

"Ready to order?"

"Two Club sandwiches with fries."

"What would you like to drink?"

"Is iced tea okay Ginger?"

"Iced tea is fine."

"Now Cal, the old expression used to be barefoot in the winter and pregnant in the summer. I was thinking pregnant after canning season so I'd be free for the next canning season. We'll probably need a hired hand and maybe his wife could clean house and provide child care. The most economical housing would probably be a manufactured home. I noticed the power system is capable of about 200 amps at 240 volts. We may need to add PV panels to a barn and a wind turbine. You only have the single bank of the submarine batteries?"

"Yes, just the one; I should probably double or triple that. That is about all we have room for."

"They look heavy."

"About half a ton each wet. More batteries would actually increase their efficiency by as much as 20 to 30 percent. The inverters last quite some time and I have spares, just in case. There's room to fill the rack."

"You plan ahead."

"A person has to."

"Would you object to putting up the fancy rings and wearing simple gold bands for work?"

"I was thinking the same thing but didn't want to bring it up."

"We'll do that before we get the U-Haul and I'll buy considering how much the engagement ring cost you, probably just 10 or 14 carat."

“Ten carat is probably the most practical for daily wear and 18 carat is more for dress up.”

“Yellow gold for daily wear and the white gold for dress up?”

“Do they make horse fencing?”

“Yes, they do and if I recall correctly, there’s a non-climb horse fence that’s 60” high that comes in 200’ rolls.”

“T posts enough?”

“Actually we’d be better off if every third post was cedar with doubled posts with diagonals at the corners. I’ll pitch in and we can hire the fence put in while we’re getting wells drilled. I’m not opposed to dowsing if the well driller prefers to dowse. Just make sure the driller guarantees the water volume. We may need 1 well per section. How large is the well you had put in?”

“It’s a 12” inch well with a high volume pump. I was thinking of grading out a pond and lining it with bentonite as reserve water for firefighting although I have a 10,000 gallon cistern.”

“You plan big, 80,000 gallons of diesel, 20,000 gallons of premium unleaded, 10,000 gallons of kerosene and 30,000 gallons of propane. Why did you get 10,000 gallons of kerosene?”

“I’ll use it as an anti-gel for the diesel. However, I didn’t get kerosene; I got #1 diesel since the large tanks contain #2 diesel. Up north the distributors blend in #1 diesel during the cold months. Kerosene lacks the lubricity. By the way, the diesel is untaxed so we’ll only pump it in an emergency. I was planning on putting in another tank for taxed diesel.”

“Do you smoke?”

“No, the cigarettes are trade goods I bought at the reservation and no I didn’t pay the extra tax. That’s why they’re sealed in plastic so they don’t dry out. I bought Marlboros, Kools, and Pall Malls unfiltered for the various preferences. If we get into a situation where cigarettes are traded, people will take what’s available. The reason people get in trouble over untaxed cigarettes is because someone sees them with the untaxed smokes.

“I bought a multi-fuel dispenser pump and it’s connected to the gas but not the #2. That leaves the second setting for the taxed #2.”

“I sometimes have a cigarette when I get really stressed. The nicotine hits me like a sledge hammer.”

“We’ll have to come up with something better.”

“We have. Okay, that finishes what I have and there’s probably room for what you have.”

“What about the food?”

“I’ll get some boxes and box it up. I’m going to have to drive for a few days to tie up loose ends. I already gave notice on the apartment. I thought I was still on the lease but it seems I forgot to sign it so I was on month to month.”

“I gave notice too and I managed to haul my food down the night I took the liquor down.”

“I swear you got one of everything.”

“Only the liqueurs. I got a minimum of 2 of the liquors. I’ll keep an eye on the bottles and whenever one is half empty, I’ll buy a replacement. Don’t let me forget to get another 2 cases of Jack Black and 6 cases of Squirt.”

“It doesn’t seem like you drink a lot.”

“Oh, I don’t. Dad drank too much and I think that’s what caused the pancreatic cancer.”

“I didn’t see any Canadian whisky.”

“I didn’t buy any, should I?”

“Daddy prefers Crown Royal rocks but generally drinks 7 and 7.”

“Remind me when we get to the liquor store. I’ll get Seagram’s Seven and Crown Royal both. I should probably add a case of Seven-up.”

It took all of 30 minutes to get the things I hadn’t moved from my apartment. While I was there, I called Goodwill and arranged a pick up. Then I stopped by the manager’s office and told him about the Goodwill pick up and the cleaning service and ask if he would let them in. It wasn’t a problem.

Our last stop was the liquor store and I bought 2 cases of Jack Black plus 2 bottles of Seagram’s Seven and Crown Royal. He had the Seven-up in stock but only 2 cases of Squirt. I took one case and ask him to order 5 more, paying in advance.

It was well we got the 6×12 enclosed trailer. It wasn’t over packed but was full enough that nothing would slip. We made one last stop and Ginger picked up her feminine hygiene products, the KY lubricant and the condoms. Fortunately, she bought the feminine

hygiene products by the case and I managed to get them to the Suburban without getting totally embarrassed. Hey, it had been a while, what can I say?

It took 6 weeks to close the sale of the business. In my case it merely meant handing over the shares of stock, signing my name several times and accepting the cashier's check. I put 500 in the bank and the other 300 in fractional gold Eagles. Those went into my 'Retirement Account'. It wasn't a 401k or any form of IRA. It was simply set aside in the safe with the other "Retirement Account" gold and silver. I suppose the closest it came to being a conventional retirement account was a no limit Roth account as it was mostly post-tax dollars. At least it wasn't rolled up twenties in a coffee can.

Once I had the money, I contracted with a fence company for the fences, hired a well driller, the same guy I used the first time, and I bought 2 Gators to get around the ranch. When those projects were completed, I checked my bank balances and had a barn and grain bins put in. Ginger paid the same contractor to put in a chicken house and I got to put in the chicken wire. That was all T posts except at the corners and the gate which got cedar posts (one at each corner, one extra at the gate, which was in a corner).

We got one of the grain bins filled with a feed mixture sufficient for the horses (COB). The second bin got 5 tons of cattle/hog/chicken feed. I planned to wait until there was a need before filling the other grain bin with alfalfa pellets.

One stall in the 6 stall, 2 story block garage housed the used utility tractor I bought along with a plow and straight disk. I also stored the Troy-bilt rototiller in there since it was my gardening equipment. I put up racks to hold the rakes, shovels, hoes, etc.

The generators were exercised every other week, taking turns and once up to speed, they switched over to pull the load and top off the battery banks as required. We had to do the PV panels on the barn in sections due to the cost. I didn't realize it at the time, but it would take a year to complete that project. We did get the second wind turbine in before starting the PV panel project. The extra inverters were added when we bought the batteries, one bank at a time.

The barn was double layer construction with compacted soil fill and single Swiss double leaf blast doors on each end. It had 6' of soil on top, too. In addition to the blast doors, we bought another pair of AV-300s and 4 sets of replacement filters. The ends had the outer wall constructed of 10" concrete. While we were at it, I got Jacob to install a tunnel between the barn and dome basement using preformed concrete pedestrian underpass.

We put in a small garden the first time, primarily to see how much it produced in the Arizona heat. I hurriedly added netting when the sun began to cook it along with a misting system. I actually did the work on the pond with that utility tractor and a blade. It was only about 15' deep in the middle and wasn't exactly rounded. We hired the bentonite

installation. After emptying the cistern into the pond slowly, I waited for the cistern to refill and ran a 1½" hose to continually add water until the pond filled.

We waited until the water temperature stabilized and decided to add Blue Tilapia since they were the most resistant to low temperatures. When I looked them up, the article said they liked duckweed. So I contacted the Phoenix water department about the fish and duckweed. They agreed sell me some fish and told me where to get duckweed seed. Once I had the duckweed established, I could pick up the fish.

Time seemed to fly and we somehow we're in the run ups to the 2012 elections. Specifically it was late August, 2011.

"I'm pregnant."

"What do you want, a boy or a girl?"

"Yes. I just want a baby and the timing is right because I just finished canning."

"And you didn't mind that you gave up teaching?"

"Do you mean the commute, the drudge and those snotty kids? You're kidding right? Tell me you're kidding."

"Just checking. I've been checking our finances and I think gold has temporarily peaked at \$1,900. I'm going to sell off some of the latest purchases fairly soon and flush up our bank account. So far the only livestock we have is that one Black Angus cow we milk and her calf that won't be big enough to butcher for another year at the earliest. We butchered all but a dozen of the chickens and won't have more until pullet season next spring. We may not buy beef until spring but as soon as the current round of pigs is weaned, we should buy some hogs. I don't suppose there is any particular time to buy horses in a state like Arizona. Do you have any preference on breed?"

"The American Quarter Horse is well known both as a race horse and for its performance in rodeos, horse shows and as a working ranch horse. The compact body of the American Quarter Horse is well-suited to the intricate and speedy maneuvers required in reining, cutting, working cow horse, barrel racing, calf roping, and other western riding events, especially those involving live cattle. That's what I would pick for a cattle operation.

"There are two main body types: the stock type and the hunter or racing type. The stock horse type is shorter, more compact, stocky and well-muscled, yet agile. The racing and hunter type Quarter Horses are somewhat taller and smoother muscled than the stock type, more closely resembling the Thoroughbred. We have to be sure to get the stock type. I would think 4 mares and 4 geldings to start with. That barn you had built will easily handle 2 dozen horses. You held off on filling the other grain bin and it should be filled alfalfa pellets.

“Tack is a whole different subject. We probably want fairly plain double rigged western saddles with sturdy breast collars and quarter horse trees. I’m not really sure how we balance between the various types but we should consider roping saddles because they have thicker horns. I would definitely want tapaderos. I think saddlebags, pommel bags and rifle scabbards would be optional. I heard somewhere that Marlin lever actions are falling off in quality and currently Winchester isn’t making lever action rifles.

“You see the occasional rattlesnake and perhaps having a firearm while riding wouldn’t be a bad idea. That one author you bought the CD from seems to think the way to go is .45 Colt and .45-70 since both were black powder cartridges. Knowing you, we’ll just end up with pallets of factory ammo if we get those. If you’re buying used, get Ruger Vaqueros, not the New Vaqueros. The original was built on the Blackhawk frame and will handle full power cartridges, assuming you can find them. And, you definitely want good lariats. I think we bought those from Saddle Barn. They sell saddles too, but you have to be sure of the size you need. I recommend buying those local.”

“So, we’ll have to wait for the horse to finish growing before we buy?”

“No, we’ll look for horses that are broken to saddle and at least four years old. My choice would be five year olds. We should also buy mares that are with foal. We’ll probably use an outside stud rather than tying up all that much in a single horse.”

“I bought a CD from Jerry D Young and one from Tired Old Man, which one do you mean?”

“TOM is the gun freak and he seems to think the M1A is the best rifle there is. Since you have 18, you must agree.”

“Dad bought those, but I agree. You never said anything about claiming your rifles, shotgun and pistols when you out shot me.”

“I didn’t have to, you made me a trustee. Why didn’t you buy me a Tac-50?”

“Do you have any idea how much those cost?”

“Around ten thousand?”

“By the time you add the suppressor, night vision rail, Night Vision, extra magazines and spare parts you’re way over twenty. Then you have to buy the ammo at \$6 a round. Thank God I get most things wholesale.”

“How much did you buy?”

“Over a half ton, 4,000 rounds. And it’s time to reorder so I’ll have to buy 6,000 rounds. As soon as I have the proceeds from the gold sale, I’ll order your rifle and us the ammo.”

“Did you save the brass?”

“Of course.”

“Buy the bullets from Hornady and get someone to reload it.”

“It would be cheaper to sell the brass to a reloader and buy new ammo wholesale.”

“Then do that.”

I sold 1,000oz of gold at ~\$1,900 to pad the checkbook (\$1,900,000 minus fees). After setting aside enough for the taxes using LIFO, I ordered her rifle but they’d gone up \$1,000. Everything was going up and we were barely out of the recession. Now we had Obamacare and it was anyone’s guess what would follow that. He struck some deal with Congress that I didn’t get the details of but it was forward looking and would begin to kick-in in 2013. I bought the gold back during May of 2012 at ~\$1,550, net profit \$350,000, minus fees. There’s luck and there’s dumb luck. I like luck of any flavor.

We had a son and we named him James Robert after our fathers. A shade over 8 pounds and a set of lungs you could hear halfway across Phoenix.

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Speaking of father’s, I had been really worried about meeting Robert (call me Bob). That was especially true considering how short our engagement was. I broke the ice with the bottle of Crown Royal on ice. It sounds sort of poetic when one says it that way. He had a few words to say about Jack and sort of gave me the evil eye. I told him my name was Calvin (call me Cal) and if Jack wasn’t already dead, I’d use him for target practice. Her mother’s name was Alice.

The topic turned to firearms and we got into a discussion. He was TOM fan, don’t you know. He liked Jerry’s stories but didn’t care for the boxy looking PTR-91 or semi-auto shotguns. When he’d finished his inspection, he had a question.

“Cal, where are your radios?”

“We have CBs in both vehicles and a base station.”

“No, I meant your amateur radios and business radios. That fancy mast you have will take a rotor for beams and a vertical on top. They sell standoffs for your CB antenna, business band antenna and an all band antenna like a D-130J Discone. There are three

major radio brands and they're all Japanese, Yaesu, Icom and Kenwood. I'm partial to the Kenwood T-2000 all band radio and you can mount them in a vehicle but they're mainly base stations.

"Cushcraft was the big name in beams for years, but I'm impressed with that Mosley line. I've been looking at their PRO-57-B40, PRO-67-C-3 and their PRO-96. If I do change over, I'll probably go with the Pro-96.

"The Kenwood's run around \$1,500 and the business radios maybe \$300-400. You can add a scanning receiver to the D-130J since it's an all frequency antenna. You can transmit on it too since I think it's rated at 100 watts. How tall is that tower, 75'?"

"No, the tower is 85'. What about licenses?"

"Ginger has an Extra Class and you can get a Technician will just a little study. They dropped the code requirement about 10 years back so it's mostly memorization and using a calculator for the Extra Class. You seem fairly bright and she can help you. Is money a problem?"

"Not at the moment. That reminds me. Since Alice and you spend half the year in Phoenix, if something really big goes down, head here. Just keep a few changes of clothes packed so you can leave at the drop of a hat."

"You one of those Survivalists or Preppers?"

"More the latter; maybe I should show you the basement."

"Wow, how much food do you have?"

"Five years of long term storage food for 7 people. Plus another year of short term food supplies... what we regularly eat. There are two wind turbines with a combined output of 100kw plus enough PV panels for another 50kw but we'll add more to get those to 100kw. Beside that we have 2 50kw diesel generators. That barn is concrete filled block with plenty of rebar. It's actually 2 block walls, one inside the other and the 60" space between the walls is filled with compacted soil. There are 3 12" wells with high capacity pumps."

"Is it radiation proof? Who lives in that trailer?"

"Our hired man and his wife and kids live in the manufactured housing. He helps with livestock and she cleans the dome. She will also provide childcare for Ginger when needed. Yes, I tried to make barn relatively radiation proof. I didn't install air locks like the dome has. I did install the same doors as the dome but only one set on each end. They're left open for the most part and regular barn doors are used instead. Those things are heavy once they're filled with concrete."

“Can any beef yet?”

“No, but I’m looking forward to it.”

“Ginger has a way about canning beef; you’re in for a real treat.”

“I understand you have a M1A. Which model do you have?”

“The standard model with a scope. Why, do you have one?”

“One, no... we have 18. There are 12 Loadeds and 6 Super Match actions that have been converted to M21s.”

“Is that the high priced Tactical rifle?”

“Yes. Dad had them built before he died of pancreatic cancer. Would you like to try one?”

“Tomorrow, maybe; alcohol and gunpowder don’t mix well. How did the two of you meet?”

“I hate to admit it but we met in a bar. Ginger is attractive and I offered to buy her a drink. I told her I lived in Phoenix but had a home halfway between Phoenix and Tucson. She asked if it was a ranch house and I suggested she could decide if it was a ranch house or something else.”

“It is definitely something else. Why did you build a dome?”

“A dome is second strongest structure there is with a full sphere being the strongest. They are becoming popular for commercial uses and some homes are being built as domes or modified domes. The reason for the basement was to provide a better footing for the dome and more storage space. The basement has a little over 45,000 cubic feet. Ginger was surprised at how much coffee I store. I date it with a magic marker when it’s added to the shelf and there are never less than 300 48oz cans. It’s a little more than one can per week for five years, giving us some trade goods.

“I don’t smoke but tobacco will be another thing in short supply should something happen so I have 300 cartons of three brands, Marlboros, Kools and Pall Malls. Those came from the Reservation and I know the guy so I got them without paying the \$4 Arizona tax per carton.”

“Combined?”

“Each.”

“I take it you’re wealthy.”

"I got lucky and bought gold and silver back in early 2002 using half the insurance proceeds from the policy on my first wife. She was murdered during a holdup of a Circle K. They were large policies and had a double indemnity clause. Double indemnity applies for accidents and murder. She was murdered September 13, 2001 and it took a while for them to pay off. The double indemnity portion paid for the precious metals and the other half for part of the cost of the dome."

"Expensive?"

"It came in under 2 million including everything except for the extra we added since and plan to add. That would be a third bank of submarine batteries, the remaining PV panels and a few more inverters. We buy the inverters when we buy the battery banks."

"You're totally off the grid here aren't you?"

"Yes we are. The reason we're adding more capacity to the system is to have enough to power both homes and the outbuildings. Each battery bank contains 168,000 amps at full charge. With 3 banks we'll have 504,000 amps available. The banks are 48 volt banks yielding over 24 megawatts. At low usage rates the batteries are more efficient putting out 120-130 percent of capacity which should more than cover the inverter inefficiencies. Assuming we draw 100 amps at 240 volts we can go years on one battery charge."

"Isn't that overkill?"

"It probably is. Have you ever heard expression *would you rather have it and not need it or need it and not have it?*"

"Is that a prepper expression?"

"Yes it is. We have over 40 rifles including 24 select fire rifles. I have a McMillan Tac-50 which is a .50 caliber rifle and just shy of 4,000 rounds of ammo. All of our ammo except for pistol ammo is match grade. There are almost 5 full pallets of ammo not counting the shotgun shells. We're ready for most anything that could come our way."

"You two get washed up for supper."

"You can use the powder room over there Bob and I'll use the Master bath."

Dinner consisted of Caesar salads, shrimp cocktails, filets and baked potatoes with dinner rolls. We had shrimp rather than prawns because the shrimp were on sale and the prawns weren't. In case you missed it, that Saturday I first cooked for Ginger, I forgot to heat the dinner rolls.

The second day we went shooting and I pulled one of the new M21s for Bob to sight in and shoot. I honestly think he fell in love with that rifle and I tagged it with a tag with his name on it when I put it away. He definitely liked the Kimbers and got his own the same way. I put a tag on the 4th M21 with Alice on it and did the same on a Hi-Power after checking with Ginger. They left to return to Phoenix the following day.

Winchester came out with new lever action rifles in .45 Colt, the model 1892, and .45-70, the model 1886. They were expensive at retail but being a dealer took out the sting and I bought 8 of each. Thing about it was I could hold onto them and sell them later for more than MSRP, so I considered them an investment. I bought early and got the models with the 24" barrels before they sold out.

To my way of thinking, a 24" barrel defined a rifle and a 20" barrel defined a carbine. A rifle produces, for the most part, a higher bullet velocity and better range. Getting 8 of each was quite the catch because *of the new Limited series, Winchester made only 251 of each caliber with the 20-inch barrels in 2008, and just 251 of each caliber with 24-inch barrels.* That's a direct quote from The American Rifleman.

The Dome Chapter 5

From the outset, our hired man, Hank, and his wife, Julie, were equipped with Loaded M1As, a PT1911B and Browning Hi-Power, respectively, and 590A1s including the bayonets. Hank had a very good knowledge of horseflesh and went with Ginger and me to pick out 4 geldings, 4 mares and later the tack. Fortunately, he had the skills to shoe horses and he commanded a slightly higher wage because of it.

With the horses out of the way, we finally made the trip to Tombstone a month after I met her parents. We were able to buy 4 very nice Ruger Vaqueros in .45 Colt. The dealer knew me and told me that they didn't have many rounds through them because the 2 guys that bought them said they were awkward. He also gave a professional discount when I showed him I brought a copy of my FFL. We only bought 2 gun belts since I didn't get Hank or Julie's measurements.

I gave him the revolvers and one box of full power cartridges and \$200 to get gun leather. Then, I ordered a pallet of full power .45 Colt ammo. I bought Buffalo Bore .45 Colt +P Deer Grenade rated at 1526 fps from a Ruger Vaquero Large Frame pre-2006, 5½ inch barrel. Since I considered the revolver essentially an anti-snake gun the first 3 rounds were those .45 Colt shot shells (CCI Blazer shotshell ammo) with 3 more in the cartridge loops. I only got a case of those. I had only seen a couple of snakes but remembered the well driller had told me he'd seen plenty moving away from his drilling rig when he'd stopped to set it up.

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I'm back to the present now, but I thought I should mention the first time I met Bob and Alice. Alice held off on going back to Missouri this year (2012) because Ginger was so close to her due date. She ooh'd and ahh'd and held James when Ginger needed to go to the bathroom. I was still learning ride those horses we'd bought way back when. I'd tried 3 of the geldings because the geldings were *supposed* to be easier to get along with.

The fourth horse would be next and Hank assured me I'd be able to ride it. He told me once I got over my fear, I could ride any of the geldings. He went on to say the mares could be more temperamental and I should stick to the geldings for the moment. He had the fourth gelding saddled and I was angry over entire situation. I marched to the horse, jammed my left foot into the left stirrup and hauled my right leg over and into the right stirrup and yelled "hah". The horse took off at a moderate pace and we got along just fine.

After about 20 minutes, I was back at the paddock and Hank had #1 saddled and waiting. Convinced I could ride, I treated that horse the same way I'd treated #4. He balked once and took off at a moderate pace when my heels hit his side. Number 2 and #3 must have noticed and I experienced very little trouble when I rode them in turn.

“I told you, you could ride.”

“You’re right; I got over being afraid and was angry. Please don’t tell the horses I was angry at myself.”

“Yeah, boss, I won’t tell them,” Hank chuckled.

We usually let Hank take farrier jobs on the weekends if we weren’t doing something else. He never said which organization certified him. He did tell me he was certified at level 2. He seemed to know his way around the horses, forge and anvil. The horse-shoes we used were manufactured shoes adjusted to the individual horses.

Most of lariats we bought were the 35’ variety of $\frac{7}{16}$ ” scant nylon rope but we bought a pair of the 45’ ropes of the same diameter. They were almost too big a coil to carry and there was no real reason to carry ropes that size 95% of the time. We let Hank decide on the saddles once we gave him the general criteria that Ginger and I had discussed.

We probably want fairly plain double rigged western saddles with sturdy breast collars and quarter horse trees. We should consider roping saddles because they have thicker horns. I would definitely want tapaderos. I think saddlebags, pommel bags and rifle scabbards would be optional. Actually, she discussed and I listened, but that’s pretty much a quote. We selected dark brown for color and unembellished oiled leather.

I told Hank to get the 11×14 saddlebags and scabbards for 4 of each rifle. Most saddle rifles were carbines with 20” barrels so we ended up ordering the scabbards from Laredo. Darn, the money goes fast when a person gets involved in firearms and ammo. But, go figure, we had 10 spare Loaded M1As with 10 25 round magazines per with bipods, scope mounts, EOTech sights, suppressors and slings. In a PAW, it would be a seller’s market and each would bring an easy 3 ounces or more of gold and the surplus ammo I happened upon at 45¢/round could easily bring \$1/round, or more.

A lot of what existed here on the ranch existed before I met Ginger. Anything missing came not long after we met. It was a darn short engagement, 6 days. I bought the engagement ring after she said yes which happened before I asked. Ginger bought the wedding rings and the rings for everyday wear. We really meshed. A funny thing about gardening is that it must cause pregnancies.

“I finished canning.”

“Good.”

“I’m pregnant.”

“That sounds familiar, are the two connected?”

“Two is a coincidence and three is a tubal.”

“Good, there only 3 bedrooms on the third floor.”

“Plus two more on the second.”

“But we’d lose our privacy. The walls are insulated, but still...”

“I can’t help it when you get me going.”

“We’ll think of something.”

My remaining firearms inventory was “sold” to the trust the day after Ginger announced her pregnancy. I had a plan in mind when I received the tax stamps.

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Barack beat Mitt but that wasn’t the biggest news because on December 14th, 20-year-old Adam Lanza fatally shot twenty children and six adult staff members in a mass murder at Sandy Hook Elementary School in the village of Sandy Hook in Newtown, Connecticut. Before driving to the school, Lanza had shot and killed his mother Nancy at their Newtown home. As first responders arrived, he committed suicide by shooting himself in the head.

Every person who had an objection to firearms came out of the woodwork. The Vice President began raising questions geared to either an assault weapons ban or total weapons ban. Surprised at getting the tax stamps, I decided it was time to get out of the firearm selling business and contacted the ATF about surrendering my license.

The stamps were safely tucked away in the safe in the trust armory. I did some switching around and made one vault the armory and the second the treasury for our gold and silver. If you’ve followed what I’ve said, you should have an approximate idea how much I have. I put a 2 drawer fireproof file cabinet in the gun vault to hold the tax stamps and papers related to the firearms.

During February, 2002, I bought 1,500 ounces of gold at ~\$300 and ~1,100 ounces of silver at ~\$4.50. Two big boxes and 100 loose coins. There was the shipping included in the \$500,000. Remember, I continued my precious metals acquisitions as the price rose, buying lesser quantities. You can only do it if you’re single, don’t date and live in a dump, but you CAN do it.

Of course inheriting ½ the Ready Mix business and the entire class 3 dealership didn’t hurt any. And, when you own ½ of a Ready Mix business, building a Dome probably costs you less than the other guy. Just remember, Bill Gates never graduated from college, either. It mainly has to do with what you do with what you have. Ginger and I were doing what married people do, making babies.

Shortly after Jimmy was born, Hank and I went shopping for Black Angus cattle. We wanted young cattle that had been weaned. The real money made in raising beef is getting them from there to being market ready. I let Hank do the picking and I wrote the checks.

“Okay, he has 60 calves, half steers that were castrated at birth using Elastration. They were fence line weaned at 6 months. Their current age is approximately 188 days. He wants \$82 per hundredweight. I’d say go for it.”

“How much are we talking?”

“He says the steers are running about 550 pounds and the heifers 475 pounds. It depends on the weight but my best guess would be about \$25,000. That’s half steers and half heifers. You get some breeding stock and some market beef in about a year.”

“Does he have any market ready beef?”

“He has a few, yes.”

“Buy two and we’ll get them butchered. You know where to get that done?”

“Yep.”

“Let me know the total. Does it include delivery?”

“I didn’t ask.”

“We don’t have a truck so make sure the final price includes delivery of the calves and the steers. Call the place and have them add enough boneless Black Angus for 10% ground meat.”

“Not 8%?”

“It needed a bit more fat, make it 10%.”

Understand, the first grain bin wasn’t full since we only had one Black Angus milk cow, some hogs and chickens. We had sent the market ready beef to be butchered over the winter and divided it 2 ways; we were getting low of meat. The freezer in the basement had more jugs of ice than meat in it. The second freezer only held about one hog’s worth of meat, frozen chickens plus more ice jugs. If I had been thinking, I would have realized that Hank knew where to take the beef, he’d been doing it since he hired on. Maybe the excitement of having our own herd, be it small, gave me a mental block.

“They deliver the beef tomorrow. We bought 30 steers and 30 heifers plus 2 steers to butcher.”

“We either need to buy pork or get some butchered.”

“What are we out of?”

“Bacon and sausage.”

“Get Julie to watch Jimmy tomorrow and we’ll drive up to Phoenix.”

“Say, do you need to order #2?”

“No, I topped off the tank with #1. I suppose we could get 1,000 #1 and 1,000 taxed #2.”

“You need to get more grain for the first bin and check the COB bin.”

“We’re okay on COB but we’d better get 5 tons for the first bin.”

If you don’t understand the conversation we’ve just had, you’ve been skimming. The third bin was nearly full of pelletized alfalfa. It was fed to the horses as a supplement to their COB and daily grazing. It would also be fed to the cattle as a supplement to their grazing along with the “cattle feed” mix we were going to order an additional 5 tons of. As the cattle gained weight and their appetites increased, we’d purchase larger amounts, probably as much as 15 tons or 3 truckloads.

The nice thing about a pregnant wife is any time the two of you feel like it, you can get together and practice making babies. It’s even better when she doesn’t have morning sickness. Unfortunately it affects more than half of all pregnant women and the proximate cause is an increase in the circulating level of the hormone estrogen.

We grew 1,280 acres of alfalfa and got 10-12 cuttings depending on the year. We sold 95% the alfalfa as large round bales to companies that manufactured the pellets and the other 5% of the first cutting was baled as square bales and stored in the barn loft. We sold 100% of the other cuttings unless we needed more hay. Our operation pretty much mirrored what other ranchers did. As we grew our herd, the ratio of sold verses retained alfalfa would change with the amount being retained increasing. We were already giving consideration to the location of bale roofs to keep the rain off the stacked hay. Rain? What rain?

The weaned calves we bought seemed to be somewhat underweight. Typically a 206 day BA steer will weigh about 660. But these were 188 day steers, a difference of 18 days. According the Black Angus organization I found on the net, the weight gain should be about 3.2 pounds per day. Doing the math I came up with 57.6 pounds that they would gain by 206 days. Five fifty plus fifty-seven point six is 607.6 which is about 52.4 pounds short. Now, was he under estimating the weight to make the sale or was he underfeeding his calves?

The guy underestimated the weight and the check I wrote was much larger than we thought it would be. When you're raising cattle, every penny counts; 30@608 + 30 @564 means he sold me 35,160 pounds of beef at 82¢ a pound. Add 2,500 pounds @ 82¢ for a total of \$30,881 plus the butchering and boneless. I'd have probably paid either way, but it galled me that he gave Hank short weights. I checked and that was the going rate for that particular day. We are definitely going to buy a new laptop strictly for monitoring the herds, cattle grain, hay, COB and alfalfa pellets.

A story my late uncle told me comes to mind. Uncle Herbert farmed in Iowa. A farmer on an adjoining farm decided to truck his cattle to Chicago in hope of getting a much better price per pound. They loaded the cattle on 2 trucks and off they went to Chicago. Apparently the cattle get a bit dehydrated during transport. Furthermore, apparently cattle won't drink water when it's raining. When they unloaded those cattle at the stockyards, it was raining and the auction was the next day. Uncle Herbert said the guy claimed his decision cost him \$8,000. Those are 1953 dollars folks. One little mistake...

Be careful what you wish for, God has a sense of humor and you just may get it... or not as in this case.

What we ended up doing in Phoenix was buying 6 whole Cure 81 hams (Hormel) and 18 packages of Hormel thick sliced bacon and 36 1 pound packages of Jimmy Dean whole hog sausage. Plus a few other things... including Oscar Mayer wieners and bologna... the cart was full. Then with the meat and 2 bags of ice in the cooler, we stopped and ordered the #1 and #2 for Monday delivery. Finally we ordered 5 tons of the cattle grain mix. The chickens eat it just fine. Of course most of our chickens are sleeping in the freezer.

I didn't mention the bread products in the freezer. Where you live in the middle nowhere it's hard to run to the store for hot dog or hamburger buns. We don't really live that far from a small grocery store or convenience store but if you buy in bulk and freeze, all you have to remember to do is take buns out when you take the meat out. Considering the price of fuel, and the time involved, you simply don't run out for anything.

Ginger bakes a good loaf of bread. We have a slicing form but it's not the same as store bought sliced bread for toast. You'll most assuredly find sliced bread near the buns. It's not like we don't go up to Phoenix or down to Tucson on a regular basis, so we don't stock a lot of bread and it's always dated.

That bimbo from California introduced a new Assault Weapons ban in the Senate. I don't think it has much of a chance of passing, this year. But, remember that deal Obama made with Congress way back when? It's 2013 and the chickens have come home to roost. They call it sequestration. One Congressman sent out a letter to his constituents:

If we do not resolve sequestration immediately, the results will be catastrophic. We have already cut \$487 billion in defense spending, which means \$50 billion in cuts every year over the next 10 years. Now, under sequestration, more than \$500 billion in new cuts will be imposed on top of the \$487 billion in cuts previously made. Sequestration mandates \$1.2 trillion in automatic, across the board spending cuts. 50% of these cuts will be forced on the backs of our service men and women, even though defense spending only accounts for less than 18% percent of our overall budget.

With just weeks to spare, the President has belatedly come forward with a proposal based on higher tax revenues and cuts in defense and discretionary domestic spending. Let's be clear: Defense spending is not what's driving our indefensible national debt. We spend less than 18% of our budget on the military, while mandatory domestic spending accounts for 60%. Despite this fact, the president has refused to consider reforms to mandatory spending – the real driver of our debt crisis – while using our troops as a piggy bank to keep unsustainable spending programs on life support.

We cannot afford this dangerous hit on our troops, national security and American jobs.

Apparently the problems with the F-22 had been solved since it wasn't in the news. The media had switched to the Joint Strike Fighter, the F-35A/B/C. It was business as usual with the price climbing every time a person reads the news. Congress and Obama hadn't reached a resolution by 1 March and sequestration kicked in. The public was in a state of near panic because retired people didn't know what it meant for their Social Security checks and government employees didn't know if they would be furloughed or fired.

“Honey, did you realize there are five carriers in Norfolk?”

“What carriers?”

“The Enterprise is there for decommissioning and the Lincoln for its midlife refueling and complex overhaul, but Obama ordered the Eisenhower, Bush and Truman into port. The Lincoln is still awaiting the refueling and complex overhaul and the other three appear to be held captive under Obama orders.”

“Can't Joint Chiefs do anything about that?”

“The Joint Chiefs aren't in the chain of command. Orders go from the President to the Secretary of Defense to the heads of the various Unified Combatant Commands. All of the branches work together during operations and joint missions, under the Unified Combatant Commands, under the authority of the Secretary of Defense with the exception of the Coast Guard. Leadership is provided by the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Yes, I looked it up.”

“What, he never heard of Pearl Harbor?”

“That’s strange too because Obama was born in Hawaii. Surely someone told him at some time about the Japanese attack.”

“I thought his mother moved back to the state of Washington when he was an infant.”

“What, he never took a history class? Besides, if I remember right, he went back to Hawaii to live with his grandparents and graduated from High School in Hawaii. He graduated from Columbia University and graduated from Harvard Law School with a Juris Doctor Magna Cum Laude. Somewhere, sometime, someone had tell him about Pearl Harbor. It has to be intentional, nobody is that stupid.”

“If that’s case why hasn’t someone exploded a nuke at Norfolk?”

“Bite your tongue, we finally received the gas masks, suits, boots, tape and spare filters today. We haven’t even put them away.”

“It’s okay, we’re inside the dome and everything is connected and buttoned up. This place is more secure than a FEMA camp.”

“You know about those?”

“Rumors!”

“Fact!”

“What, some conspiracy theory you read on a preparedness website?”

“Someone sent me a map that showed something like 600 locations. I can’t show it to you because it was on my old computer that crashed and the new computer has Windows 7 SP1. I added Office 2010 and Outlook Express is no longer the email program for Internet Explorer 10 and I have to use Outlook and I don’t understand it one bit.”

“That’s pretty lame.”

“I know, but it’s absolutely true.”

“Are you sure you don’t have it on the laptop?”

“The laptop has never been connected to the Internet or the home network.”

I caught a video on Fox News where a sheriff suggested that the gun control issue could be the cause of a second American Revolution.

Ginger was due in May and Bob and Alice hadn’t made their spring drive back to Missouri. Alice called and I was closest to the phone and answered.

“Cal, Alice. I’m glad I caught you rather than Ginger.”

“Is something wrong Alice?”

“Bob had a heart attack. They transferred him to the Mayo Clinic in Scottsdale and they’re about ready to take him into surgery. I’ve still got to call Andy and see if he can fly out. Can you explain to Ginger and the two of you come up?”

“We’ll be there in ninety minutes or less.”

“Take your time; they said the surgery would take quite a while.”

“How are you holding up?”

“About like anyone in this situation would. Scared to death and crying other times. Bob’s too young for this, he’s only 64.”

“If he’s in Mayo, I’m sure he’ll be fine.”

“I hope so. I better call Andy. I’ll see you when you get here. I’m in the surgical waiting room.”

“Who was that?”

“You mother. Pack a bag for 3-4 nights; we’re going up to Phoenix. Honey, your father had a heart attack and they transferred him to the Mayo Clinic in Scottsdale. He’s going into surgery. Your mother is calling your brother to see if he can come out. I’ll go make arrangements with Julie to care for Jimmy.”

Ginger was obviously putting up a good front even though the news was shocking. She got one of the large suitcases and packed for both of us. I explained to Julie that we had to go to Phoenix and might be gone for several days. She told me she’d probably move the crib and playpen to their home along with an assortment of the Gerber baby foods. I went back to the dome and got the portable playpen and the diaper bag. Ginger followed me with Jimmy. I went home and got the suitcase and put it in the Suburban and filled both tanks with taxed diesel.

“Can’t you go faster?”

“If I go faster, the Arizona Highway Patrol will stop me, give me a ticket and spend more time lecturing me than we lose by going the speed limit.”

“Do you know where Mayo is located?”

"I've driven by it but never been inside. We'll be there is about an hour. I know you're worried but at the moment there is nothing anyone except the surgeons can do. Alice said she was 'scared to death and crying other times'. If he was predisposed to having a heart attack, be thankful it happened before they returned to the farm. The Mayo Clinic in the Midwest is in Rochester, Minnesota.

"The Cleveland Clinic was ranked #4, the Mayo Clinic #3, Johns Hopkins #2 and Massachusetts General Hospital as #1 in the 2012-13 by US News and World Report which came out in July of 2012."

"How do you know that?"

"I saw a copy and bought it since it interested me. They listed a total of 17 'best' hospitals, but I can only remember the top four. Wait, I think Ronald Reagan UCLA Medical Center was ranked #5."

"How's Daddy?"

"He's still in surgery. Just before he went into the operating room, the primary surgeon said that a second review suggested they might be able to get by with stents. I don't remember what he said, but the stents are coated with a drug that prevents blood clots. DES, I think he called them."

"I read about those. A drug-eluting stent, DES, is a peripheral or coronary stent placed into narrowed, diseased peripheral or coronary arteries that slowly releases a drug to block cell proliferation. This prevents fibrosis that, together with clots, could otherwise block the stented artery, a process called restenosis. The stent is usually placed within the peripheral or coronary artery by an Interventional cardiologist or Interventional Radiologist during an angioplasty procedure. If that's what they do, it won't take nearly as long and should produce better results."

"Mrs. Scott? Your husband is in recovery and you should be able to see him in about an hour in the coronary care unit. We were lucky and were able to use angioplasty to insert four drug-eluting stents. That procedure is much better than a coronary bypass. It seems to avoid many of the downsides to a bypass operation and is much quicker. Unfortunately bypass operations often lead to strokes. What does your husband do for a living?"

"We farm during the summer and come to Phoenix during the winter."

"I doubt he'll be doing much farming now. You may have to sell the farm and move into a city. Where are you from?"

"The St. Louis area."

“That’s quite a ways from our clinic in Rochester. He will need follow-up care. I’ll see about cardiologists in the St. Louis area that we can make a referral to.”

Andy arrived the next day and Ginger and I picked him up at Sky Harbor. Ginger quickly filled him in on Bob’s condition. He explained to me that they had a hired man and during the winter when Bob and Alice were away, he and the hired man took care of the farm. I told him that we had a hired man too and he and his wife were tending to our ranch and watching Jimmy.

We drove him to the motel near the Mayo Clinic where he got a room. After he had his baggage in his room, we drove to the Mayo Clinic and took him to see their father.

“You old goat, you scared the crap out of me.”

“Yeah, it scared me too. I’ve got good news-bad news and I’ll just tell you how it is. The bad news is I’m done farming. The good news is that I’m dividing the section between you and your sister. I’d been thinking about that anyway and had done some research. My attorney says that the gift tax on the market value of the farm is less than the unified credit of \$1,730,800. Therefore, we can transfer the farm to either or both of you. Just to be fair, your mother and I decided we’d go 50-50.

“You will each own 320 acres. How the two of you go about consolidating the section is up to you. Your mother and I also discussed the snowbird thing and decided to reside in Arizona permanently. I could always have another heart attack driving cross country and put your mother’s life in jeopardy and I choose not to do that. Why don’t you go home with Ginger and Cal and check out his ranch? That will give the two of you the chance to consider the possibilities and give me a chance get more rest. I’m sure I’ll feel much better in a couple of days. I may even be out the hospital by then.”

“I already checked into a motel.”

“Well, wait to drive down until tomorrow and come back tonight and see me during visiting hours.”

“I could use some food and a shower so I’ll go take care of that and be back.”

“You have a ranch?”

“Yes, it’s about halfway between Phoenix and Tucson. It’s smallish as ranches go, only 3 sections. We grow anywhere from 10-12 cuttings of alfalfa and sell most of it to pelletizing companies. Of course, we bale a small amount in square bales for our horses and now cattle.”

“And I thought I had a big farm.”

“You’ve heard of the King Ranch no doubt?”

“Heard it, yes. How big is it?”

“I believe over 800,000 acres. The largest ranch in the world is in Australia and it is 6 million acres. There’s another large Texas ranch, the Waggoner Ranch, which holds the distinction of being the largest spread in Texas under one fence. So by those standards 3 sections is a small ranch.”

“How many acres of alfalfa do you grow?”

“Twelve hundred and eighty; we generally take up to 5 percent of the first cutting as square bales for our use and sell the other 95% of the first cutting and all of the subsequent cuttings as large round bales. It sort of depends on how much room there is in the barn loft. We’ve thinking about erecting some rain roofs and storing more hay outside.”

“We’re planting mostly corn these days. Last year was a bust with the drought and all but with storms we’ve had and those that are forecasted, me might have enough subsoil moisture to get a crop in 2013.”

“You don’t irrigate?”

“No, we don’t irrigate and I’m not sure if there’s enough water in the aquifer if we sank a well.”

“We managed to sink a 12” well on each section. I used my utility tractor and a blade and slowly gouged out a pond for backup water in case we had a fire. The cistern only holds 10,000 gallons.”

“Dad mentioned you had large stores of fuels.”

“Our capacity is 80,000 gallons of untaxed #2, 10,000 gallons of untaxed #1, 20,000 gallons of premium gasoline, 30,000 gallons of propane and 20,000 gallons of taxed #2.”

“How do you keep it all fresh?”

“A company in Houston called Products Research, Inc. makes good fuel stabilizers and we buy it in the 55 gallon drum for the diesel and 2 5 gallon pails for the gasoline. The rate of use is 1:2000 so we usually end up buying 1 drum of PRI-D every year and stabilizing it every year. One hundred ten thousand gallons of diesel take one drum. The stuff has a shelf life of about 3 years, or so I’ve been told. I like to keep 2 years ahead and if something comes up would order extra drums and pails.”

“How often do you top off the tanks?”

“Every 1,000 gallons of usage and we add ½ gallon of the appropriate stabilizer. We’ve been holding off on the propane and I’m thinking were probably about ready for a 3,000 gallon load.”

“What do you run on propane?”

“Our kitchen stove and the in countertop gas grill plus our hired man’s stove, hot water heater and furnace. We’re totally off grid and use those on demand electric water heaters in our home. We use little heat and that’s electric too. Our home has been called something else and it’s very modern. As you will see, I took your father’s advice about amateur radios and business radios. We had to add another generator and second battery to the vehicles because of the power requirements of the TS-2000. Both vehicles are equipped the same.”

“Antennas?”

“Just what your father recommended, the Mosley Pro-96, an AM-2N6 for 2 meters and 6 meters plus the MY-430-14 for 440 and we replaced the CB antenna with the Mosley Devant Special, ⅝ wave vertical ground plane antenna. We’ve got a Diamond D-130J on another standoff. The antennas for the business band radios are Motorola verticals. Got all the beams on a single very heavy duty rotor and we can always add more standoffs since I bought extra. We use Wilson 5000 magnetic mount vehicle CB antennas. The mobile amateur antenna is a MFJ 1456.

“The Motorola radios we went with were the CP-200 and CM-300 although we only licensed one high VHF channel. The antennas are all Motorola HAD4014s. We bought 6 of each radio and 6 antennas giving us spares. The beams are topped with a MFJ 1798 10 band vertical.

“We bought the 32 channel CM-300s and programmed all 32 channels. We bought twice as many CP-200s and programmed half on the 16 lower frequencies and half on the higher frequencies.”

“So I’ve been told. Our situations are different in a way. Until recently, I had a class 3 Federal Firearms License. Most recently we were my largest customer. My father established a trust to own NFA weapons several years ago. Ginger and I are the trustees and as such can handle NFA weapons. The only problem is the Hughes amendment to the FOPA that would ban a civilian from ownership or transfer rights of any fully automatic weapon which was not registered as of May 19, 1986. Of course the amendment only applies to select fire weapons according to the ATF. Silencers and short barrel shotguns are unaffected. You will notice that manufacturers say that shotguns with 14” barrels are for sale to LEOs and military only. All of our shotguns have 20” barrels.”

“You don’t hunt?”

"I never had the time until Ginger and I got married. She keeps me hopping so I never took it up. We do have rifles that can take game out to 1,000 meters and two that can take game out to 2,000 meters. In the latter case, there might not be much left to eat."

"Fifty caliber?"

"McMillan Tac-50s."

"Rifle scopes?"

"Nightforce NXS 12-42x56mm riflescopes with mil-dot reticules."

"Probably suppressed and you have night vision."

"Yes to both. All of our center fire rifles except for the Winchesters have suppressors. That why I brought up the Hughes amendment, we have 24 rifles we can't legally own."

The Dome Chapter 6

“How did you manage that?”

“I told H&K I had an order from a Police Department for 12 HK416s and 12 HK417s, all with the 20” barrels and 30 magazines per rifle. I was a class 3 dealer and sold H&K firearms. They didn’t question it.”

“You’re lucky.”

“Let me give you some proof of that Andy. One, I met and married Ginger. Two, when gold was at \$1,900 I had a hunch and sold 1,000 ounces. Seven months later, I bought those 1,000 ounces back at \$1,550 an ounce. We have a very good hired man who happens to be a certified farrier. We now grow beef, hogs, horses and chickens and apparently babies.”

“Watch it.”

“Sorry Ginger, I forgot you were here.”

“I wouldn’t tease her like that Cal, she’s been known to get even.”

“Sorry Ginger.”

“You bet your bippy you’re sorry. I suddenly have a headache and it’s going to last for months.”

“But you don’t get headaches.”

“You just gave me one.”

“Told you.”

“Eat first or shower first?”

“Eat.”

“What flavor?”

“Mexican.”

I drove to a Mexican restaurant I hadn’t been to in some time. Same name, same owners. The food was fabulous.

“How come you never brought me here?”

"I just never thought of it. However to ensure you don't get a second headache I'll mention it every time we come to Phoenix."

"My first headache is getting better. I should be over it soon."

"Tonight?"

"Don't push your luck."

It apparently occurred to Ginger that Andy was coming home with us tomorrow and we were in a motel room tonight. Her headache suddenly vanished like she'd never had one. I knew that the entire time but also knew better than to push.

We went back to the hospital and visited with Bob for a while. He was looking better. As we were leaving, Ginger told me she had an idea she wanted to visit with me about before we got to more serious matters. I mentally replaced the 'rious' with an 'x' and paid close attention.

"Let face it, we don't need the money Cal. What I'd like to do is apply my half of the profits against the sale of the 320 to Andy based on the land value established when Daddy gifts it to us."

"It's fine with me. Missouri has one thing I detest, humidity. If you sell it for what your gift was valued at, you won't have any gains to pay tax on. That would especially be true if you made a contract with Andy to do that very thing as soon as you take title. You can include some kind of clause that if you die, the debt is forgiven and he can get a decreasing term life policy to pay you off if he dies."

"Looking to get lucky sailor?"

"I was never in the military."

"Move!"

"Yes dear."

I can tell you one thing for a fact, between the hard work on the ranch and the bedroom antics I was in the best physical condition of my life. I won't claim she was insatiable but it was a near thing. However, the further she got into her pregnancy, the more satiable she became. Growing babies must take a lot of energy.

The next morning we stopped by the Mayo Clinic to visit Bob for a few minutes and then headed south on I-10. While I gave Andy a tour of the property, Ginger pulled the plastic off a bed for Andy. She also pulled out 3 New York strips and picked up Jimmy from Julie. Andy and I got sent over to pick up the crib and portable playpen. Over the course of

the tour, Andy kept looking over his shoulder at the dome and shaking his head. Obviously Bob and Alice left off several details about our ranch including the fact that we lived in a dome.

During Ginger's first pregnancy, we had a stairway elevator installed so she could ride up to the second level. During her second pregnancy, we had it extended to the third level. Jimmy would move to the third level when the second baby was born and would reside in the adjoining room where Jimmy had been living. It was sort of like musical bedrooms but with enough rooms. The other second floor bedroom was the 'guest bedroom' for all practical purposes.

After lunch, I gave Andy a full tour of the dome except for the treasury. He asked, "Is that where your precious metals are stored?"

"Why would you think that?"

"It has a vault door."

"That's a holdover from when it was my class 3 inventory storage room."

"And now it's your treasury?"

"Alright, yes, it's our treasury."

"You indicated a portion of what you have for gold. If I may be so bold, may I ask how much you have?"

"That's very personal. Okay I own about ~1,800 ounces of gold and ~1,100 ounces silver. Your sister owns about ~400 ounces of gold and ~500 ounces of silver. Our combined holdings are ~2,200 ounces of gold Eagles and ~1,600 ounces of silver Eagles. I also have \$3,000 face value of junk silver, one bag each of dimes, quarters and halves."

"A 1,920 acre ranch, a dome home that probably ran \$2-2½ million, a fortune in precious metals, a good start on your herds, I assume ample feed stocks, several tanker loads of fuel, a lot of stored water and a good source of income from the sale of alfalfa. Ginger can sure pick 'em."

"I understand she didn't do so well the first time."

"Yeah, but he's pushing up daisies. Is this your first marriage?"

"Second, I was a widower. My first wife was shot in a holdup of a Circle K. And, my father died relatively young from pancreatic cancer. I inherited half of his Ready Mix business and all of his firearms business."

"I knew there had to be an explanation about how you accumulated the wealth you obvious have at your age. Not that there is anything wrong with it, but I'll have to admit I was curious. What's your ultimate goal? You mentioned the alfalfa and the livestock you two are acquiring."

"We'd like to have a good string of Quarter Horses and profitable cattle and hog operations. We may eventually reduce the alfalfa production if we need more space for the livestock although I'd like to continue growing at least a section of hay. We test the soil annually and add potassium and phosphorus as necessary. Once we're producing enough manure we'll add that as additional fertilizer. We may hire a second hand if we need to.

"Ginger and I discussed an idea that would let you own the full section. I'm sure she'll discuss it with you. It's her and my initial thinking and we can afford to be flexible. Talk it over with her and we'll work out any differences."

"Nice place. I wouldn't mind living here."

"You haven't been here during the summer. Think about 120° in the shade. It's dry though. One last thing, if trouble ever comes up and you need a bug out location, you're welcome here. You can probably drive straight through in roughly 18 hours."

"What kind of trouble?"

"Like the stuff hitting the fan kind of trouble. You'll know and if you aren't sure, call and we'll confirm or not confirm. The barn and the dome basement are connected via a tunnel constructed of concrete pedestrian archway. Everything vital is in the dome or basement. Do you know what kind of trouble I'm talking about?"

"Yes, I'm beginning to understand what you mean."

"Keep an eye on Washington, I don't trust Obama and neither does Ginger."

"You're survivalists."

"Peppers; we're not out to overthrow the government. I think the government will overthrow the government and there will come a point where the people say No Mas."

"You speak Spanish?"

"Minimal. I'm not conversant. We had staff that was conversant when I owned the Ready Mix. If we get a second hand, I may hire a Latino who is bilingual and let him teach me enough to get by. They're good with cattle... you've heard of Vaqueros?"

"Mexican cowboys?"

“Yes, Arizona was part of Mexico and has a significant Mexican population. For some reason they’ve retained the Spanish language and are bilingual, speaking both languages fluently, with a Spanish accent.”

They came close to an agreement. Andy said he liked the deal but couldn’t afford the insurance. Ginger and I discussed the insurance and decided we had an insurable interest in Andy if they made the deal and we would pay for the insurance. He agreed to the deal in a heartbeat under those terms. And, since we’re buying insurance, I got a half million dollar policy on her, life paid up at 65. I had switched my beneficiary from my mother to Ginger right after we were married.

After Andy returned to Missouri, we reviewed our food supplies and upped them to 5 years for 12 people. One cutting of alfalfa produced 4-5 tons per acre at \$100 or more per ton from 1,280 acres. You do the math. (\$512,000-\$640,000 times 10-12 less what we kept.) Overall the hay alone produced anywhere from \$5 million to \$7.5 million per year.

We kept buying precious metals and paying taxes. We did buy another 6 Super Match actions and had McMillan do their stuff. We went through a class 3 dealer in Phoenix for the Surefire and other suppressors. Unfortunately most of it cost near retail including the 6 additional Kimbers and 6 additional Hi-Powers and 18 590A1s. It generated another ATF inspection but they did those annually anyway. I think I was on their list, in more ways than one.

While we never bought any Mk211MP, we did buy some AP. There was at least a 6-8 month backlog on ammo in early 2013. We could wait since we had a lot of ammo. In fact, I called Jacob and had them construct an ammo bunker to free up space in the basement for the food and additional sleeping quarters. The radio room was in my den/study on the first floor with the RG213 cables entering the basement level and routed through the floor into my den/study. The ground was routed in the same manner. I bought an extra CM-300 and antenna for the utility tractor along with another pair of CP-200s.

Bob let Andy keep his radio equipment and bought a complete set for their Lincoln and their home in Apache Junction. Their home had been built ‘out in the sticks’ due to the CC&Rs most developments had. However, the home was constructed using the Farnsworth method of construction with 6” interior walls with 2” of cementitious foam plus 3½” R-15 fiberglass insulation and ¾” drywall throughout plus a very good air conditioner. The cementitious foam had an R value of R-3.9 per inch but it was fireproof.

Yeah, their home cost more to construct but Bob was deathly afraid of fire and built according. Arizona required ¾” drywall in garages where there was a ‘fire hazard’ so he improvised and adapted. We had 4” of cementitious foam as the first layer of the dome and 5½” of cementitious foam in the form walls. We also used ¾” drywall throughout or did I mention that before? The dome walls were plastered.

"It's time. My bag is packed, put it in the Suburban and take Jimmy over to Julie. I called and she's expecting him."

"You're early."

"We're having twins."

"And you just forgot to tell me?"

"Oops."

"Did you forget to tell me the sexes?"

"Girls."

"You said 3 meant a tubal."

"Absolutely. Call the Highway Patrol and get an escort, I'm really hurting."

They drive pretty fast when they have a reason. A screaming female in labor is high on their list. We went to the closest hospital in Phoenix which happened to be the hospital we used the first time. The doctor was waiting when we arrived.

"We're going to need to do a C-section."

"Do whatever you need, Ginger is really hurting."

Sometime after at least 90 minutes, the doctor returned.

"You have two beautiful healthy daughters. There was a complication, however. Your wife is recovering but her uterus was close to rupturing when we went in and we were force to remove it. I'm sorry, but the two of you won't be able to have more children."

"She'd planned to get a tubal anyway after 3."

"She'd mentioned that and it completely slipped my mind. We were very busy for a while."

"Everyone is okay or will be okay so don't worry about it Doc. When can I see her?"

"She's still in recovery but you can go see your daughters in the Nursery."

"Darn, I forgot to call her mother and father. I'll do that and then head to the Nursery."

I caught Alice and quickly brought her up to speed. I told her I'd either be at the Nursery or in Ginger's room. I made a quick call to the Arizona Highway Patrol, explained who I was and asked them to thank the Trooper who got us to Phoenix so fast because it probably saved 3 lives. They wanted to know a little more and I explained the circumstances. Whoever took the call thanked me for calling.

Ginger was still in the recovery room so I headed to the Nursery to see our new daughters. The nurse told me they were identical, not fraternal, twins. Ginger and I had only picked one name for a boy and one for a girl. Let me amend that, we had picked one name each; *she* had picked two girls names, Kathleen Lynne and Jennifer Anne. The girl's name we had agreed on was Jennifer Lynne. I later learned she got the names from a story titled *Expedition*.

She told the doctor on the way into surgery to name the first born Kathleen Lynne and the second born Jennifer Anne. That explained why they had bands with their names and their names on the incubators. Do you ever feel left out? Relief is only a minute away; get a Silver Bullet, America's finest light beer.

Between the day we got married and the present, we hadn't replaced many of the full cases of liquor and replaced only a few bottles of the other liquors and liqueurs. I'd replaced the full kegs with Pony kegs. A Pony keg holds 62 16 fluid ounce glasses of beer. They were replaced at 120 days whether empty or partially empty. One point five ounces equals 44 $\frac{1}{3}$ milliliters. A fifth held 750 milliliters or ~17 drinks and Ginger didn't drink while she was pregnant. With her not drinking, I limited myself to Coors, generally one glass on the nights I had a glass. Arizona doesn't have a keg law, yet.

I stored the empty liquor bottles rather than disposing of them. They could be used to produce M1 "frangible" grenades (Molotov cocktails). Waste not, want not. I had 16 ounce Coors and Coors Light glasses, the plain versions, I'd ordered from Beer Collections, 24 of each. I'd found them on the Internet by searching for 16 ounce beer glasses.

"How did you know to get a police escort?"

"Something didn't feel quite right. Lucky huh?"

"Welcome to the club. They're beautiful identical twins. I see you even picked out names. Why didn't you tell me we were expecting twins?"

"I thought it might upset you because it was twin girls."

"We have James. I not upset in the least that we have twin daughters. I'm mildly upset that you didn't tell me, but that will pass. Your mother is on the way."

"Your mother is here! They're beautiful. Why didn't you tell me?"

"I didn't tell anyone Mom."

“Where did you come up with those names?”

“From a story I read. One character was named Jennifer Lynne, A second Kathleen and a third Anne. I just cobbled the names together based on those 3 characters. Just be glad I didn’t use their nicknames.”

“And they were?”

“Darlin’, Red and Shark Bait.”

“I see what you mean.”

“They had to do a Hysterectomy Mom. My uterus was beginning to rupture when we arrived. The doctor said the damage was too extensive. We wouldn’t have had any more children because I was planning on a tubal before I went home. Since we have 3 twin bedrooms on the third floor, it works out just about perfectly.”

The way it turned out was that our daughters were so nearly identical I had a great deal of difficulty telling them apart. Ginger solved the problem for me by adding their names to their tops. At 6 months of age, I still had to check their names. It was eerie. The Trooper who had led the way to Phoenix stopped by one day to see the babies. He commented that putting their names on the tops was probably a good idea. He said it was rare that anyone ever called to thank them for doing their job. It might not stop him from giving me a speeding ticket under different circumstances but he appreciated the call.

Ginger had a transverse scar that went almost totally across her lower abdomen. It was closed by staples. It would fade with time but would be a constant reminder. On the weather front, the upper Midwest had a fair amount of subsoil moisture and the crops went in without a problem. The problems didn’t begin to surface until later due to the lack of rain. Oh, they got rain; it just wasn’t enough to sustain the crops. Andy took a chance and harvested his corn as ensilage since it would provide livestock feed, if not profits.

The silage was fed to the dairy cattle and a portion of the crop was stored as baled silage to be used for beef cattle and horses. The profit, if any, would come from the sale of the milk and later the beef. Hogs, being omnivores, will eat anything. Andy said the drawbacks to feeding forage to the hogs was that fresh forages are low in dry matter, which means the pig must consume more material to get the same amount of nutrients found in grain or in complete feed. For this reason, pastures and/or high levels of forage in the diet are less practical for pigs weighing less than 40lb. and for sows in lactation. Another drawback to using forages, especially pastures, is that they might not be available during the entire year. This means that the feeding program may have to be modified from one season to the next.

The bottom line was he would be able to market beef, pork and milk. They should turn a profit but it might be small. Ginger told him not to worry about, a deal was a deal and whatever he sent would be applied to what he owed. She also asked him how the remainder of the Midwest was doing and he said it was turning into a worse disaster than 2012. In view of what I'd been hearing on the media, that bit of news frightened me. More and more Obama was taking on a rather imperial attitude.

The problems with the economy and with Iran and North Korea were being laid at the feet of the Republican majority in the House. He was all but characterizing Boehner as a threat to national security. The uproar that caused in the House had some members publicly calling for his impeachment. When the former President, Clinton, went to calm him down it was reported Obama refused to find time in his busy schedule.

Sequestration was in full effect and Obama was blaming the Republicans in the House for that, too. The Budget Control Act of 2011, enacted August 2, 2011 was signed into law by President Barack Obama on August 2, 2011. The Act brought conclusion to the 2011 United States debt-ceiling crisis, which had threatened to lead the United States into sovereign default on or about August 3, 2011.

The law involved the introduction of several complex mechanisms, such as creation of the Congressional Joint Select Committee on Deficit Reduction, options for a balanced budget amendment and automatic budget sequestration.

The bill was the final chance in a series of proposals to resolve the 2011 United States debt-ceiling crisis, which featured bitter divisions between the parties and also pronounced splits within them. Earlier ideas included the Obama-Boehner \$4 trillion "Grand Bargain", the House Republican "Cut, Cap and Balance Act", and the McConnell-Reid "Plan B" fallback. All eventually failed to gain enough general political or specific Congressional support to move into law, as the midnight August 2, 2011, deadline for an unprecedented US sovereign default drew nearer and nearer.

Ultimately, the solution came from White House National Economic Council Director Gene Sperling, who, on July 12, 2011, proposed a compulsory trigger that would go into effect if another agreement was not made on tax increases and/or budget cuts equal to or greater than the debt ceiling increase by a future date. The intent was to secure the commitment of both sides to future negotiation by means of an enforcement mechanism that would be unpalatable to Republicans and Democrats alike. President Obama agreed to the plan. House Speaker John Boehner expressed reservations, but also agreed.

The long and short of it was that the Administration wanted tax increases and the Republican majority in the House wanted spending cuts. The Senate got sidetracked and couldn't find time to deal with Dianne Feinstein's proposed Assault Weapons Ban and the House wouldn't even consider legislation of that nature. Maybe we'd get a pass this year.

What may have been the second shot heard around the world occurred when Obama issued a Presidential Determination to implement an Assault Weapons Ban cooked up by Vice President Biden. Not to make light of it, but by the strictest interpretation, anything that discharged a projectile could be considered an assault weapon. It was even worse than the law Feinstein proposed. That also meant that it got both her and Barbara Boxer's immediate support.

The NRA and the GOA immediately challenged the Determination. The Supreme Court had ruled in *Youngstown Sheet & Tube Co. v. Sawyer*, 343 US 579 (1952) that Executive Order 10340 from President Harry S. Truman placing all steel mills in the country under federal control was invalid because it attempted to make law, rather than clarify or act to further a law put forth by the Congress or the Constitution. To date, US courts have overturned only two executive orders: the Truman order and a 1995 order issued by President Clinton that attempted to prevent the federal government from contracting with organizations that had strike-breakers on the payroll.

A Presidential Determination is a document issued by the White House stating a determination resulting in an official policy or position of the Executive Branch of the United States government. Presidential determinations may involve any number of actions, including setting or changing foreign policy, setting drug enforcement policy, or any number of other exercises of executive power.

One of the most famous presidential determinations was President Clinton's Presidential Determination 95-45, which exempted the US Air Force's facility in the vicinity of Groom Lake, Nevada (Area 51) from environmental disclosure laws, in response to subpoenas from a lawsuit brought by Area 51 workers alleging illegal hazardous waste disposal which resulted in injury and death. Subsequent to this determination, the lawsuit was dismissed due to lack of evidence.

A Presidential Determination is distinguished from an Executive Order which is a directive (as distinguished from a determination) issued by the President of the United States.

The stated basis for the determination was the number of mass shootings which were occurring at about the same rate as before, with the body count climbing.

After the determination was issued the public was urged to turn in their weapons to avoid confiscation and possible criminal prosecution. And the wait began because there was no deadline set. Further, the firearms he really wanted were the semi-auto and select fire weapons together with those which accepted large magazines (more than 7 rounds was the definition of large, larger than the standard Colt M1911 magazine).

Overnight, small capacity magazines, 7 rounds and less, sold out. The manufacturers had finally caught up with the demand for 20 and 30 round magazines. Now they were between a rock and a hard spot. But, with no movement by the Executive Branch, they

began to unload those and switch production to the 'legal' magazines. The magazines that shipped would only accept 7 rounds until you removed the floor plate and removed the piece of wood between the spring coils.

The ATF apparently turned a blind eye. They were secretly intercepting the shipments, getting the addressees' names and addresses and allowing the shipments to continue. The shipper generally used UPS or FedEx to ship their products. They had the cyber-terrorist people monitoring certain websites known to be visited by the pro-gun crowd. All they needed was an internet address to track the viewer to a specific computer in the home. Example: 76.246.64.244 is, in fact, a static IP address. There is a website that displays your IP address. Presumably, if you visit the site several different times and get the same address, that address is static. <http://www.whatismyip.com/> (The address is TOM's address and he still lives in Palmdale at 4560 Moonraker Road and his phone number is still 661-285-8501. He usually doesn't answer his phone.)

Would John Ross give out his home phone number? Heck no, he's sold thousands of books. TOM has sold about 24 CDs and has yet to realize one red cent. http://www.ebay.com/itm/ws/eBayISAPI.dll?ViewItem&item=170861827290#ht_3464wt_1185

So all the time Public Enemy #1, BATFE, is doing all kinds of things they shouldn't be doing. As far as the NRA and GOA, the DOJ wrote the Determination and knows almost every hole in what they wrote. They have an answer (brief) prepared for the NRA and GOA briefs, subject to minor revisions. Nobody is perfect except the President. However, some of us are really suspicious about that. Where did Rohm go? Oh yeah, he's the Mayor of Chicago... Who was Mayor when Al and Bugs were sending Valentines?

Ginger and I didn't really need more firearms; we could equip 2 Platoons or more. More ammo would be nice, but the demand will end and it will be available again without being allocated. You didn't know that? Ammo during February-May 2013 was on allocation until supply caught up with demand, according to Ammoman. 44Mag dot com had 5 round and 10 round CMI M1A magazines in stock and the 20s would be next. They may even have more 25 round magazines before X-Products has the 50 round drums available. They're out of stock too. A loaded magazine weighs 5 pounds and should make the M21 give up a bunch of recoil. They're in the process of changing their website address.

The Dome Chapter 7

You may ask yourself, how does Cal know this stuff? I spent my evenings on the Internet, lately. That incision has to heal and it gets me out of changing poopy diapers. So, I draw a pint and sit at my computer and learn all kinds of things. I did find some 7.62x51mm ammo. 20rds – 7.62x51mm Silver State Armory 168gr Sierra BTHP Military / LE Ammo for \$1.75 per round, on sale, reg. \$2 per round. Maybe I should offer to trade him 20 rounds of 168gr Black Hills BTHP match for 40 rounds of that stuff. It should be okay in the Loadeds.

We're definitely done buying guns, the armory is full and so is the gun safe on the main floor. And, that's after Jacob built the ammo bunker and I moved all the ammo out there. Not to worry, it's accessible from the tunnel to the barn but the Swiss blast door opens in, not out, so if it blows we should be okay. You can call that a honey done.

And since I told Andy how much gold we had and also explained how much we earned from alfalfa alone, what are we doing with our excess money? Gold and silver are off their highs so we're buying in a usable form, US gold and silver Eagles. That's after giving the IRS an unreasonable sum quarterly. We have good idea how much taxable income the crops produce, thanks to that laptop. I've come to realize that we're more farmers than ranchers due to our principal source of income.

Ginger suggested today that the incision was sufficiently healed that we might resume our late night activities at a reduced pace. Yee-haw. We're fast approaching the capacity of the barn for the horses and farrowing sows. Hank suggested we extend it length wise and move the Swiss blast door. I told him to look into what it would cost.

We're definitely going to need more hands and more farm tractors. We bought a large and a small John Deere for baling and hauling the small bales. We also bought bale forks and 3 hay wagons; plus a new hay elevator because it was easier than hay forks to get the hay to the loft. That's kind of tricky since the only openings to hay loft are inside the barn. That small utility tractor powers the elevator.

We built 3 of the rain roofs for the outside hay, primarily for economies of scale. Ginger and I discussed leasing the 2 half sections behind our 2 half sections and decided not to. We want as little to do with federal government as possible, including the BLM. It's bad enough dealing with taxes and the ATF. Say, they haven't been around yet, what's up?

At Hank's suggestion, I hired two additional hands. Got them nice doublewides topped with PV panels. One hauls the small bales and he and I put them on the elevator while the second guy in the loft stacks them. Got a lead on two Vaqueros looking for work. Don't really need two now but they're brothers-in-law and have their own horses and tack. We had a family meeting and decided to up the double wide order to 6 and do it up royally. Also ordered a 4th battery bank and addition inverters but the batteries will have to go into the garage.

After even more discussion, we elected to erect a double wall construction power house and move all the power components to the new building freeing up a bunch of space in the basement. We simply can't put everyone up in the dome should the need arise. I ordered the Swiss blast door and an American Safe Rooms door for the inner door and they began construction. We used some of this month's hay money to pay for everything. Take note that this is the money for what we sold them last month. They sure aren't in a hurry to pay.

I'm happy now that Jacob got a propane tank that big since we'll be running 6 mobile homes and our appliances off it. Because we used a different company to build the power house, we were able to get the same company that erected the barn to extend the barn. I decided to not move the blast door and get another set with 3 AV-300s, 2 for the barn and one for the power house.

Andy called Ginger and they had a long discussion. About the only part of the conversation I heard was when she raised her voice and said, "I said don't worry about it!"

"What was that about?"

"It was Andy filling me in on what the farm earned this year. The bottom line was that if he divided the profit they wouldn't have enough to live on. I told him not to worry about it and he started to go on and on. I had to raise my voice to get his attention."

"The 2013 gift exemption is \$13,000 per person. Reduce the debt by Andy's share and his wife's share. What's his wife's name? Cheryl?"

"Sheree; she was named after some actress."

"I'm guessing that would be Sheree North."

"I think so but I'm not sure. So, reduce the debt balance by \$26,000?"

"Yes; that will give them five plus acres free and clear. Don't tell them and I'll our have our tax guy file any necessary forms."

"Andy's not going to like that."

"He'll get over it if the bad weather continues."

My fellow Americans,

These past two years of crop failures have placed the nation in an untenable position and I must, regretfully, declare a national emergency. While we seem to be keeping up with the demand for petroleum products, we are woefully short on food products.

When coupled with sequestration, our ability to buy grains from counties with surpluses may be impaired. I am therefore implementing the following steps immediately.

1. We will withdraw any remaining troops from Iraq and Afghanistan. The reduction in defense spending will allow the country to buy much needed grain.

2. We will temporarily reduce military recruiting and will allow the size of our military to shrink naturally due to attrition to a supportable level. Again, the saved costs will allow us to buy more grain and foodstuffs.

3. In view of the increasing crime and the failure of your fellow citizens to turn in their Assault Weapons in response to my Determination, I am now issuing an Executive Order to implement that Determination.

4. Abraham Lincoln once found it necessary to suspend the Writ of Habeas Corpus and while I will not do so at this time, it will remain under consideration.

5. In conjunction with the possible suspension of the Writ of Habeas Corpus, if conditions warrant, I will circumvent Posse Comitatus by declaring an Insurrection in progress. I am stating this now as fair warning to those who would challenge your government in response to it exercising its lawful duties.

Thank you and goodnight.

“Can he do that?”

“He can do that; the real question is can he get away with it?”

“Won’t there be more calls for his impeachment?”

“Possibly; one thing he has going for him is the reduction of Defense spending regarding what ultimately became two unpopular wars. The impact on Iraq will be minimal or non-existent but the impact of withdrawing from Afghanistan early will have a profound impact. Using that reduction to cover any food shortages should gain him a few friends.”

“What are we going to do about it?”

“Buy more cattle and horses and increase the quantity of square bales. Order 55 gallons of PRI-D and 10 gallons of PRI-G. Get the power house finished and the equipment moved. I’ll have Jacob run another tunnel. We’ll contract out running the utilities for the 6 doublewides.”

“Why 6?”

"I'm hoping get a bulk discount. I'm sure we will need them eventually as we hire more Vaqueros to help with the cattle and horses. I'm thinking about making Hank foreman and possibly hiring a separate farrier. Think we should go for 8?"

"Do we have the money?"

"Sure do."

"Do it and put PV panels on all the homes. How much room is there in that power-house?"

"We could move the generators and reroute the plumbing for the fuel. There would still be room for up to 10 battery banks and the necessary inverters. We have to wait a month on those and 4 more wind turbines. There is actually room for more generators but I rather go green with wind and solar. The advantage we gain by moving the generators and supplies is much more space in the basement for accommodating the ranch hands, just in case."

"Do that too."

"There is an upside, you know."

"Oh?"

"Yeah, since it's employee housing that we furnish gratis, it's an asset we can depreciate. That's what we did with Hank's home and set up to do on the additional homes. That reduces the taxable income."

"You definitely understand economies of scale."

"Yes, I do. I'm going to order another dozen Loadeds, 590A1s and PT1911Bs. They're going to have to provide their own saddle guns. I want to keep those four we haven't done anything with to appreciate. If Winchester continues to sell them, I'll probably buy more. We should drive down to Tombstone and see if we can get any more of the Ruger pre-2006 Vaqueros."

"Just call him. He can call around for you."

"I have a lot of calls to make tomorrow."

"Good, I have other plans for the moment."

I called the dealer I knew in Tombstone and he had 3. He'd check around and get all he could find and call me back. He mentioned he had 2 of the 24" Winchester 1892s and 2 of the 24" 1886s. I put those on hold along with the 3 Vaqueros. I also told him I'd take

all the Vaqueros he could find up to 12 with the 5½” barrels. When he called back, he’d managed to locate 11 more and I told him I’d take them if he’d get them and hold them. He also located 1 more 24” 1892 and 1 more 24” 1886 and I told him to add them to the pile.

When I talked to Jacob about the tunnel, he said it would take 2 weeks to get the arches and he’d send a crew down shortly before to do the excavation.

Ginger and I drove up to Phoenix to check on the doublewide mobile homes. We found a 3 bedroom model we liked and ordered 8 with the desert package explaining that they were for employee housing. We got a bit of a discount due to the size of the purchase and a bit more pertaining to some of the extras we added. That check was a bit more than I expected. We checked each of the gun shops in Phoenix and found 3 more Vaqueros with 5½” barrels.

Next we went to the solar company and ordered 2 battery banks, the associated inverters and enough PV panels for the mobile homes. They said it would be a month or more and COD. The PV panels for the barn extension would have to wait a month or two. While we could have easily cashed out gold, we chose to wait and accumulate the alfalfa money. Finally we hit the Mexican restaurant and headed home. By the time we got home, we were too tired to play patty cake. We showered, individually, and each fell into bed.

The Tombstone dealer called and asked when I was coming down to pick up the firearms. I explained that we had some unanticipated expenses and it would have to wait for the next alfalfa check or we could pay in gold and silver Eagles. He jumped at the change to get the Eagles so I dickered a bit and we came to an agreement concerning how many of each. I got them out of the safe and, on a hunch, added a few more of both.

My thoughts were that there might just be more than he was able to acquire. Although the New Vaquero was more popular among SASS shooters, others didn’t care that the pre-2006 revolvers were larger because they could handle full powered loads including those from Buffalo Bore. There were several gun dealers in Tombstone.

“Ginger, I’m headed to Tombstone, want to ride along?”

“I’d like to but I have too many irons in the fire today. I could if you could postpone until later in the week.”

“He’s really chomping at the bit.”

“You go ahead then. Stay in touch on 40 meters; you know the frequency on the base station.”

"I'll do that before I forget. By the way, we're short on cash so I'm paying for the guns with gold and silver."

"It's about time we got some into circulation. I'll see you when you get home and will call if anything comes up."

"Bye."

The gold was divided amongst my pockets. Tenth and quarter ounces were in my shirt pockets and half ounces were in my vest pockets. I had ounce coins in my front jeans pockets and the silver coins in bags I could slip into my back pockets. About ninety minutes later, I was standing front of the dealer in Tombstone. He handed me the 4473s and 3310.4s and I started filling them out. When I finished he ran me through NCIS, smiled and started to pick up the gold and silver that I doled out while he ran the check. The handguns went into a box separated by layers of sheet foam. The rifles were still in the manufacturer's boxes.

After I left there, I checked each of the other dealers and came away with one Vaquero from each. These guns were in better condition than some that I got from the first dealer. Unfortunately none had any of the Winchesters. On the way home, I checked dealers in Tucson and came away empty handed except for some Buffalo Bore ammo in .45 Colt and .45-70. I was about half way between Tucson and home when Ginger came over 40 meters.

"Cal, I just got a call from that state Highway Patrol Officer telling me that Public Enemy #1 is planning a raid in less than an hour."

"Get all the hands up to the dome Ginger and have them lock you down. Tell them to lose their firearms anywhere, probably in the haystack. They're to tell the ATF that we're away from home. I'll deal with them when I get there. Tell Hank that when I get close, I'll call him on channel 28 upper sideband on the CB."

"Okay. Be careful."

"Count on it."

"Hank, it's me. What's up?"

"They're here. So far they can't get into the dome and took it upon themselves to search my home and the doublewides. Of course they came up empty. I put them where you suggested."

"My problem is that I have a bunch of Vaqueros and 6 Winchesters and I don't want those seized."

“No problem, I’m going to send José to Tucson to pick up more lassos.”

“I’ll be waiting 5 miles south. I’m pulling over now and parking in the median crossover.”

“You’ll get a ticket.”

“Somehow I doubt that.”

I took off my Kimber and added it to the box. I also added the 2 double magazine pouches. A white Arizona Highway Patrol vehicle pulled up just behind me a bit and stopped. I walked down and it was the Officer who we had called.

“Engine problem?”

“Yeah, I think so. I’m waiting for one of my guys to bring me a replacement fuse. Sorry I parked in the crossover. There he is; it should just be a couple of minutes. I have to transfer some things to his Jeep.”

“Mind if I look?”

“Help yourself.”

“Vaqueros and a Kimber? I always half wanted a Kimber but they’re too pricey. What kind of Winchesters?”

“Three 1886 in .45-70 and 3 1892 in .45 Colt. Twenty-four inch barrels.”

“Oh nice. I’d better get back on patrol, you take care, Cal.”

“You too Ramón.”

“What’s up boss?”

“I have a bunch of Vaqueros and Winchesters plus my pistol. Here’s \$40, drive down to Tucson and pick up 5 of the usual $\frac{7}{16}$ ” scant nylon 35’ lariats. The cash is for lunch and maybe a beer. Use the company card for the lariats. And, keep the change.”

“No problem.”

“BATFE KEEP YOUR HANDS IN PLAIN SIGHT.”

“You don’t need to shout. I’m unarmed.”

“Are you Calvin Burgess?”

“I am for a fact.”

“We’re here to seize some weapons. Who has the list?”

“Here, read this list. Do you have those weapons?”

“No.”

“What do you mean no.”

“No. As in I no longer have them. I turned them in.”

“All of them?”

“Yes all of them.”

“Can you prove that?”

“Well, I didn’t get a receipt. In fact they were kind of nasty.”

“Who was kind of nasty?”

“The Phoenix Police Department. They claimed the select fire HK416s and 417s were transferred in violation of the Hughes Amendment.”

“We saw those. Somebody slipped up, that trust should have never been issued tax stamps. You basically sold them to yourself, didn’t you?”

“I can’t deny it. My wife and I own the trust and are trustees.”

“We need to search.”

“Got a warrant?”

“No we don’t got a warrant.”

“That should be, no we don’t have a warrant.”

“You know what I meant.”

“Obviously.”

“Ok smart guy, we’re sending one man for a warrant and will wait right here until he gets back.”

“That’s fine; I’m going to check some things in the barn. You can include that on the warrant.”

“You’re just doing that to irritate them.”

“I am for a fact. Did you get the weapons moved to the haystack?”

“Yes.”

“All of them?”

“Every last one. Darn boss man you have a lot of guns... over 100.”

“I bought a bunch of Vaqueros and 6 more Winchesters today. I sent José to Tucson for 5 35’ lariats and gave him money to have lunch and a beer.”

“Boss, he’s in AA.”

“I know and this is a good time to see if he working his program. I told him to keep the change and if I’m right, he’ll have all \$40 when he gets back after dark. I don’t mind having him on the ranch if he can keep sober. Otherwise...”

“What did you tell those guys?”

“That I turned everything over to the Phoenix Police Department. I also told them that the guy who I turned them into was angry about my having the H&Ks because that violated the Hughes Amendment. He admitted that someone slipped up. I would have had them either way because I’d have just kept my class 3 license.”

“You can do that?”

“Sure. The only people who are allowed to have post Hughes Amendment machine guns are the manufacturers, dealers, law enforcement and military. I assumed the ATF would turn down the applications for the tax stamps, forcing me to keep my class 3 license. When they screwed up, I ran with it and turned in my license and log.”

“They can search until they’re blue in the face for the good it does them.”

“I’m sure that will be an improvement to the red faces and sweat I see at the moment.”

“They look like they’re ready to melt.”

“If they were smart, they’d get on the north sides of the buildings and get what little shade is available.”

“How are you going to explain the ammo?”

“If they find the bunker I’ll tell them I was waiting for the price to go up before selling it.”

“How long do you figure?”

“Ninety minutes to Phoenix, thirty minutes to fill out the warrant application, maybe an hour to get it approved and ninety minutes back. Four to five hours.”

“They should be well done by then.”

“You still have that small digital video recorder that will record in most lighting conditions?”

“Yeah.”

“Get it and several cards and extra battery packs. I want this whole thing on tape.”

“José has a camera too, identical to mine.”

“Get it too, Ginger or Julie can use it.”

“Julie knows how.”

“Okay it will be Julie. If they give you any guff, refer them to me and I’ll call my Trooper friend.”

“He’s the one that warned Ginger, isn’t he?”

“Yeah; Ramón visited with me while I waited for José. He drooled over my Kimber. I may just have to pick up one for him with a case of Ranger T-series .45acp +P and make sure he has at least 5 magazines. I owe him twice for doing something for us; it’s time for me to pay the debt. He was the one who led the way to Phoenix when Ginger had the twins.”

“A friend then?”

“An acquaintance; I’m sure he’d give me a ticket if he caught me speeding. Can you close the cistern outflow valve without getting caught?”

“In a New York minute.”

“Ginger Cal. We’re shutting down the water supply. Make sure we have enough stored.”

“There’s plenty, we have those jugs in the freezer.”

“Pull out four. Keep one and I’ll pick up the other three.”

“Oh. I like it. It’s 113° in the shade.”

“Right, they’re somewhere between medium rare and medium. Still think I can be nasty?”

“I said awful. Nasty is up a step or two. How long are you going to leave them sitting out there?”

“Until they return with a search warrant; I figure it will take about 4½ hours before the guy gets the warrant. Let me get the water passed out.”

4 hours later...

“Did you get the warrant?”

“No sir.”

“Why not?”

“One of our guys checked with the Phoenix Police Department and spoke to a Sergeant. He remembers the guy turning the firearms in and said he raked him over the coals over the banned weapons.”

“What was the disposition of the weapons?”

“Destroyed.”

“Did they get the serial numbers?”

“Our guy didn’t ask. He did get a list of makes and models and that checks out.”

“I don’t like it. Ok wrap it; we’re out of here.”

“What happened?”

“I was listening to what you told those a-holes. I called Ramón with a list of makes and models and related what you told those people. He said he’d take care of it.”

“Call him back and ask him to drop buy. I have some presents for him.”

“What?”

“A Kimber and a case of Gold Dot.”

“Cal, José is back with the lariats.”

“And?”

“Sober as a judge. We’ll bring the firearms back in.”

“Okay.”

“I finally contacted Ramón. He said he’d stop by when he got off duty.”

“I’ve changed my mind on that.”

“Oh?”

“He can have one of each of anything that he wants excluding the Tac-50s, with ammo.”

“That’s pretty generous of you.”

“We owe him more than we could ever pay him. He saved your life and the life of our twins. He kept me out of the slammer. Nothing will ever pay him what we owe him.”

The Dome Chapter 8

“Did they back off?”

“Sure did. Come in, I think you left some things behind the last time you stopped by.”

“What?”

“You’ll see, come in.”

“Mrs. Burgess, it’s nice to see you again.”

“Coffee Ramón?”

“Can you do tea?”

“What flavor?”

“Earl Grey.”

“I’ll put the water on. Cal, you forgot to tell Hank to turn the water on!”

“Hank, open the water valve.”

“I’m on it.”

“What’s this?”

“It’s a new in the box Kimber Custom TLE II with 5 magazines. The long hard case is what matches it, an M21. Can’t break them up, they’re a set. There a case of 200gr +P Gold Dot and 2 500 round cases of 175gr Black Hills match BTHP in 7.62×51mm.”

“Why are you doing this?”

“We owe you several times over and it’s more than we can ever repay. You saved Ginger’s and the twins lives. You saved my bacon today.”

“I can’t take these things.”

“Why not?”

“In the first instance, I was only doing my job. Today, I was only doing what was right. All I did was call-in a favor from a friend who owes me big time.”

“Nevertheless. You said you wanted a Kimber, so there’s your Kimber. The rifle and pistol are matched sets assembled with tender loving care. Where one goes, the other goes.”

“Here’s your tea Ramón. Sugar?”

“No thank you.”

“I still don’t think its right. But, ok, I’ll accept the Kimber.”

“And the M21. We have 12 sets and several of them are new in the box, or should I say new in their Plano cases. The best part is that if they try to track them, some Sergeant at the Phoenix PD told the ATF that they’d been turned in and destroyed. Now, if he needs something for his trouble, I have new, spare Loaded M1A with a Taurus PT1911B.”

“That might be a good idea.”

“Give me 5 minutes.”

“Mind if I see your collection?”

“Uh... okay, follow me.”

“So you did have the select fire rifles.”

“I’m afraid so. They’re arguably some of the best on the market with a guaranteed barrel life of 20,000 rounds.”

“I see they’re suppressed too.”

“Yeah, those suppressors are Surefire.”

“Did you ever add up your investment?”

“Not really. Most of the things were acquired wholesale. Since we’re increasing the size of our cattle operation, I’ve been acquiring the pre-2006 Ruger Vaqueros that will handle the full powered .45 Colt loads. I bought the ammo from Buffalo Bore. The first 3 rounds in each revolver are those CCI shotshells to handle snakes. Fortunately, Winchester has brought back the 1873, 1885, 1886 and 1892. I don’t care for the 1873 or the 1885. I have managed to accumulate several 1886s and 1892s.”

“Going to hunt buffalo?”

“I haven’t seen any to shoot at. I’m pretty sure an 1886 with that Buffalo Bore ammo would take one. Okay, let’s get these in your car and come back for the ammo.”

“Sure.”

“The ammo is down this tunnel. The tunnel is to the barn but branches off towards the power house and the bunker was built off the tunnel behind a Swiss blast door.”

“Man you have a fortune tied up in this place.”

“My first wife was murdered in a hold up at a Circle K. We had large insurance policies and murder is double indemnity. After she died, I got a one bedroom dump and was frugal beyond belief. And you’re not taking into account that I owned half a Ready Mix company when the dome was constructed. I got what I wanted plus when I sold my half.

“There’s a lot of money to be made growing alfalfa and selling it to pelletizing companies. Plus I inherited the class 3 business and half the trust that owned Dad’s gun collection. I suppose we’re better off than many and anything I give you or your friend can be replaced. You see, I only buy the action from Springfield Armory and have McMillan bed the action in one of their stocks and install the bipods. I install the scope mount, suppressor adapter and other accessories.

“I can still buy the suppressors with adapters through another dealer I know, albeit under the table if necessary.”

“How tight of a pattern do the M21s shoot?”

“All other things being equal as tight as ½ MOA or better. Ginger is exceptional and after sighting in an M21 for the first time, shot less than ½ MOA at 200 meters. That was a new, fresh out of the box, rifle.”

“You’re really into preparedness. It looks like you’ve changed some things around in that basement and will change more when that power house is finished.”

“We do plan changes since we’ve increased the number of employees. More battery banks, more PV panels, more wind turbines and additional inverters to supply sufficient power for 10 living units plus the out buildings. I’m moving Hank up to foreman after we find another fulltime farrier. I may just have to buy extra blast doors and air systems to have them on hand when needed.”

“You can’t house everyone in the dome?”

“We could get to that point. We may have to consider an additional shelter. Ginger’s parents live in Phoenix year round now and we’ve invited her brother to come down if there’s trouble and he has sufficient warning. Plus 8 additional families with who knows how many children. We’ll capitalize what we can and depreciate it. It’s still going to eat into the earnings.”

“I’d better be going. Thanks again for the 2 rifles and 2 pistols. I’ll see to it my friend gets his rifle and pistol.”

“You’re most definitely welcome.”

By the start of 2014, the power house was completed, all of the doublewides were installed, we were up to 8 wind turbines and we were still adding battery banks and inverters. I had an order in for 60 of the FM50 Gas Masks in assorted sizes and accessories plus extra filters. We had a deal made to acquire additional Black Angus heifers as soon as they were weaned in a few months.

The barn extension had been completed and I’d ordered a single Swiss blast door and another of the largest double leaf doors plus 3 AV-300s with 3 sets of extra filters. Jacob would be breaking ground in March to add a large, rectangular shelter with cooking facilities, 9 bedrooms, 2 dorms, 4 $\frac{3}{4}$ bathrooms and a large dayroom/dining room. We had equipped all of the farm tractors and Gators with business band radios and all of the employees’ vehicles with the Cobra 148 GTL SSB radios we favored with the Wilson 5000 magnetic mount antennas.

Each home also boasted a CM-300 business band radio and 4 CP-200 handheld radios along with a CB base station. I’m sure an aerial view of the ranch would have shocked many. We were getting moisture like the previous winter, especially in the Midwest. The question on every farmer’s mind was would this be a repeat of 2013?

We bought 60 freshly weaned heifers but they were 94¢/pound. They had only been weaned one day and weighed less, but in total, cost more. We’d have to feed them to breeding size and get them inseminated, our preferred choice. The shelter had been completed, equipped and stocked with food. It connected to the tunnel running to the barn and was physically closer to the barn than the dome. With the employees homes about halfway between the dome and barn, it was ideal.

I’d managed to replace the M21 going my usual route but this one cost more since I was no longer a dealer, c’est la vie. I also bought a Loaded to replace the one I gave away and all of accessories so it was equipped the same as the others. My Spanish was improving but I had a long way to go. Ginger was learning it from some of the wives and much more proficient than I. We went for a group buy on upright freezers, buying 9. Each employee could now store meat which we produced. We tagged it as an employee benefit, like the housing, and expensed only the costs.

We had also instituted a shooting program for our employees, their wives and teenagers. Each had 2 50 round X-Product drums and 20 of the 25 round magazines. The price of ammo had finally leveled off and fallen and I loaded up on more Black Hills and some Lake City surplus M80 and M855A1. Our staff was about 60-40 Latino and the 40% were doing their best to learn a working knowledge of Spanish. I can say 60-40, even though we had 9 employees, because one of the men was of mixed heritage. Juan was probably best shooter and Ginger and I assigned him an M21 and Kimber.

“Honey, did you realize they still have four of those five carriers in Norfolk?”

“They finally put one out to sea?”

“No, they decommissioned the Enterprise.”

“Well, there’re dumb and dumber. I guess he picked the ‘er’. How are we on food?”

“When we bought the last time after the employee shelter was finished, I bought 5 years for 53 people. I added three of those to our stocks and 50 to the employee shelter stocks.”

“So you planned on a maximum of 65 people for 5 years?”

“Yes.”

“Why did you only buy 60 gas masks?”

“I bought some of those infant rigs and small children rigs, five each of the Baby Safe Pro and the Child Safe Pro with plenty of extra filters. I’m not sure why I did since we wouldn’t let the children out until it was safe; call it a just in case safe measure.”

“Ammo?”

“Two thousand rounds per pistol, the same for the shotguns and at least 6,000 rounds of Black Hills per rifle plus those two pallet loads of surplus. No hand grenades, rockets or Mk211, but we have Molotov Cocktails and plenty of gas. I figure we can grind up some polystyrene and dissolve it in benzene and gas to thicken the gas. Napalm B has a commonly quoted composition of 21% benzene, 33% gasoline (itself containing between 1% and 4% benzene to raise its octane number), and 46% polystyrene.”

“What are you going to use to hold the napalm?”

“Those liquor bottles we’ve been saving since we met. We may need use fusees as an ignition source as Napalm B is difficult to ignite.”

“We have fusees?”

“I’ll pick some up.”

“Are you sure we’re not forgetting anything else?”

“Let’s both start keeping a list. We can always send José to pick the stuff up. Say, those feminine hygiene supplies are just gathering dust in the basement, should I move them to the employee shelter?”

“I don’t think so. I mean we don’t know who will end up in the dome besides Mom and Dad, possibly Andy’s family and possibly Hank, Julie and their kids plus Ramón, Maria and their kids. Best we buy a separate stock for the employee shelter. You should probably give Julie the company credit card and have her pick up the supplies.

“I wouldn’t feel comfortable about discussing that with Julie.”

“I’ll do it. It will be up to her to decide if we do separate supplies based on personal preferences or just one set of brands. Jerry wrote about a similar problem in *Expedition* and they settled on institutional supplies. If it were up to me, we’d buy Tampax and Always Maxi-pads and party-liners.”

“If push comes to shove, designate your selections as the institutional supplies. It would make everything simpler.”

“I’ll discuss it with Julie and we’ll decide. Probably contact a wholesaler and get a truckload. Heck, we might even get them to deliver. No one uses reusable pads anymore.”

“It might not be a bad idea to get a pattern for the reusable pads, just in case. We probably should stock a couple of bolts of whatever kind of cloth we’d need.”

“Do you want to stock up on jeans and blue work shirts? Of course than would mean socks, underwear and boots.”

“I don’t think so. It might be a good idea to put the word out that everyone should have several spare sets of clothing like that in the employee shelter. You can talk to your mother and Sheree and find out what everyone in the family wears. We can stock those.”

“What about your mother and Robert?”

“No. She married the competition; let him provide for them. If we had World War Three, Phoenix would probably be a target and as far as I know, they probably don’t have a weather radio.”

“You’re bitter.”

“No, I’m PO’d and don’t plan to change anytime soon.”

“Forgive and forget before it eats you alive.”

“You do it double to cover for me.”

“Cal, you need to take a chill pill and calm down. You started this preparedness thing before we even met and it seems to me that you’re letting it get to you. Those FM50 gas masks are a perfect example. You could have chosen The MSA gas masks that the Air Force and Navy used. Maybe the filters wouldn’t last as long as the filters for the FM50 but you could have purchase a whole lot of extra filters for what those masks and spare filters cost. It seems that 99 and 44 hundredths of the time you just have to go first class.”

“Yes, I guess I do, we got married didn’t we.”

“That’s what I mean; you bought me an engagement ring I’m guessing cost you about \$20,000 when a half carat VSI would have just as acceptable. I guess the upside is we can hock the ring if we ever get desperate. And 12 M21s? Really, sometimes you’re worse than Tired Old Man. Does it really mean much that under the right conditions you can hit a butterfly at 300 meters? You could probably do the same with a Loaded and the 168gr ammo at 300 meters.”

“The dots are one minute of angle and I couldn’t see the butterfly at 300 meters.”

“I give up. I’d better go visit with Julie before I forget to do that.”

“And I probably should see my friend at the Res and have him order another 300 cartons of each brand of cigarettes. Maybe I can get him deliver them and pay for them with gold at the spot market price. Do you think I should buy some scopes for the Loadeds? You may be right if they had a halfway decent scope on them.”

“Sometimes you make me want to scream. Just do whatever you want, you will anyway.”

I did occasionally get head strong, what was a moderately price scope I could get for the Loadeds, Weavers? I checked out Brownells and decided on the Redfield Revolution 4-12x40mm scopes with Accu-range for \$260. At least we already had the Sadlak mounts and only needed 30mm rings.

Last year North Korea said they had a missile that could reach the US. The follow-up to the missile test had been the detonation of 5-7kt nuke that was supposed to be miniaturized. Matters were made worse when the Japanese cut off education funding for North Koreans. Furthermore the 5+1 failed to reach an agreement over Iran’s nuke program. Even Hillary was a better Secretary of State than John Kerry.

Those extra carriers at Norfolk made emergency sorties to clear the port. That’s when we passed out the weather radios to all 18 adults on the ranch and drove to Apache Junction to give a pair to Bob and Alice. Ginger checked with Sheree and ordered 4 to be shipped to Andy and Sheree from Oregon Scientific. The extra spending permitted through 30Sep13 had gotten the Lincoln fueled and the complex overhaul started.

In order to allow the Lincoln to sail on short notice, the complex overhaul was done in sections. An additional spending extension allowed the completion of the complex overhaul; maybe Obama had never heard of Pearl Harbor, but Congress had. Repairs or upgrades were completed ahead of schedule. Now, what was he up to?

We ordered one final assortment of ammo from Black Hills, Speer, Brenneke, Remington and a dealer who sold surplus, Lucky Gunner. I had a sneaking suspicion I'd overlooked something.

"Cal, where is the ALICE gear stored?"

"What's ALICE gear?"

"All-purpose Lightweight Individual Carrying Equipment. The load bearing equipment they used during Vietnam."

"Oops. Is there any chance we can get some in short order?"

"Probably off the Internet but you'd want it shipped 2nd or 3rd day air."

"Can you handle that Hank?"

"Of course."

"Get 60... no, make it 72 full sets. The extra might make good trade goods. I've got to run up to Phoenix."

"What else did you forget?"

"Fighting knives; Cold Steel has a Phoenix outlet. I'd better ask Ginger to order another drum of PRI-D and 10 gallons of PRI-G."

"Those Bowie knives they sell?"

"If I can get enough; otherwise the closest I can come."

I managed to get 8 Laredo Bowies, 4 Natchez Bowies and anything I could get with a blade 7' and longer. It was a mixture of San Mai III and SK5. More importantly, I got enough.

"I got what I went to Phoenix for; did you and Julie work out something?"

"Yes we did and we'll go with Tampax, and Always Maxi-pads and party-liners."

“Did you call about the PRI products?”

“Yes, worry wart, I called about the PRI products. I ordered 2 drums of PRI-D and 20 gallons of PRI-G. We’re doing an extra-large garden this year and I ordered Jars and the pickling and tomato mixes from Canning Pantry and bulk packed lids from Tattler with extra rings.”

“Did you happen to hear the story about Muslim unrest in the US?”

“No, what did you hear?”

“According to the US census for 2000, 576,000 Arabs (or 48 percent of the Arab population) lived in just five states: California, Florida, Michigan, New Jersey, and New York. The population increased significantly between 2000 and 2010. Apparently some of our population of Arab ancestry has begun to organize into more militant groups. Muslims constituent 1.2 million people or about 1/3% of our population.”

“Are you saying Arab Spring has moved to our country?”

“I’m not, but that was what the radio announcer suggested.”

“And in early 2013 law enforcement officials were suggesting a second Revolution might arise over the gun control issue?”

“You’re 2 for 2.”

“Correct me if I’m wrong. Obama warned the population that he might declare an Insurrection in progress in that address.”

“You’re right, that’s 3 for 3. What concerns me is the poor and or minorities joining the Arab extremist groups and all hell breaking loose. I suspect that’s all it would take for Obama to request UN assistance.”

“He wouldn’t do that!”

“Are you sure?”

“Uh... maybe he would. So what are we going to do about it?”

“At the moment nothing; we’ll wait and watch and choose a side when it happens.”

“Don’t you mean if it happens?”

“No, it’s not a matter of if, only when.”

As strange as it sounded, I truly believed that. Over the past 6 years, Barack Hussein Obama II's actions led many of us to believe anything was possible from the man. It was like he had his mind made up and he didn't want anyone confusing him with facts. When sequestration was the hot issue, he spent money on road trips rather than sitting down and working with Congress to reach an acceptable solution. And, we're due for another round of budget cuts this year.

That was apparent when on 27Feb13, Boehner said, "We have moved a bill in the House twice. We should not have to move a third bill before the Senate gets off their ass and begins to do something." The reference was to Harry Reid, the Senate Majority Leader. If I were to hazard a guess, Boehner and Reid aren't friends. That was slightly over a year back.

What Democrats didn't count on was the backlash. The entitlements had broken the nations back, financially. Wasn't that the problem back in 2011? The law that created sequestration had been a suggestion from White House to avoid defaulting on our debt. At the time, Boehner had doubts. Those cuts were across-the-board cuts; they hurt everyone. Obama counted on them being so painful, Congress would find a solution. Apparently, he didn't realize that the Democrats and Republicans in Congress are, first and foremost, politicians. And never the twain shall meet.

Have you heard of Watts 1965? In the 1940s, in the Second Great Migration, black Americans migrated to the West Coast in large numbers, in response to defense industry recruitment at the start of World War II. The black population in Los Angeles leaped from approximately 63,700 in 1940 to about 350,000 in 1965, making the once small black community visible to the general public.

On the evening of Wednesday, August 11, 1965, 21-year-old Marquette Frye, an African American man, was pulled over by white California Highway Patrol motorcycle officer, Lee Minikus, on suspicion of driving while intoxicated. Minikus was convinced that Frye was under the influence and radioed for his vehicle to be impounded. Marquette's brother Ronald, a passenger in the vehicle, walked to their house nearby, bringing their mother back with him.

Backup police officers arrived and attempted to arrest Frye by using physical force to subdue him. As the situation intensified, growing crowds of local residents watching the exchange began yelling and throwing objects at the police officers. Frye's mother and brother fought with the officers and they were eventually arrested along with Marquette. After the Fryes' arrests, the crowd continued to grow. Police came to the scene to break up the crowd a few times that night, but were attacked by rocks and concrete. Twenty-nine people were arrested.

The ensuing riot lasted 5 days, from August 11 to 17, 1965. The five-day riot resulted in 34 deaths, 1,032 injuries, 3,438 arrests, and over \$40 million in property damage. It was the most severe riot in the city's history.

Then someone shot and killed Dr. Martin Luther King. The King assassination riots, also known as the Holy Week Uprising, was a wave of civil disturbance which swept the United States following the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr. in 1968.

Some of the biggest riots took place in Washington, DC, Baltimore, Louisville, Kansas City, and Chicago. In New York City, Mayor John Lindsay traveled directly into Harlem, telling black residents that he regretted King's death and was working against poverty. He is credited for averting riots in New York with this direct response.

In Boston, rioting may have been averted by a James Brown concert taking place on the night of April 5. In Los Angeles, the Los Angeles Police Department and community activists may have averted rioting in the city. Several memorials were held in tribute to King throughout the Los Angeles area on the days leading into his funeral service.

In 1992 a group LAPD officers attempted to restrain Rodney King, after a high speed chase, using their batons. They were tried... and acquitted in a change of venue trial held in Simi Valley. It was 1965 all over again (thanks Yogi). The mostly white officers were videotaped beating an African-American motorist Rodney King following a high-speed police pursuit. Thousands of people throughout the metropolitan area in Los Angeles rioted over six days following the announcement of the verdict.

Widespread looting, assault, arson and murder occurred during the riots, and estimates of property damages topped one billion dollars. The rioting ended after soldiers from the California Army National Guard, along with US Marines from Camp Pendleton were called in to stop the rioting after the local police could not handle the situation. In total, 53 people were killed during the riots and over two thousand people were injured. Some Hispanics participated in the looting in order to feel a sense of belonging and connection within the community.

The Emergency Broadcast System was also utilized during the rioting.

The Dome Chapter 9

The stage was set and there was growing unrest in the country. It would only take a single spark to cause a massive explosion. The pro-gun conservatives were looking for an excuse to exercise their 2nd Amendment Right, if necessary. The liberals had their hands out asking for more when there was none to be had. And the radical Muslims and a few of their minority colleagues thought it had been cold out and a few burning buildings might allow them to warm their hands, or whatever.

Maybe MS-13 was involved; the most popular firearms were 9mm pistols. Any brand would do; they didn't need to be Hi-Point. After a few National Guard Armories were overrun, the only thing they needed was ammunition. M193, M855 or M855A1, any 5.56x45mm cartridge would do, although tracers tended to disclose their positions.

Riots exploded over the entire country wherever there were significant minority populations with axes to grind. This was a change from whatever had preceded it. Oh, that's right, HE promised CHANGE. Nah, this couldn't be what HE had in mind. Be careful what you wish for, God has a sense of humor and you just might get it. He said he would declare an Insurrection in progress and kept that promise.

Meanwhile down on the ranch, several things happened over a brief period of time. When the riots broke out, the ranch hands went from the Vaqueros to the .45acps and replaced their lever action rifles with M1As; seeing a Vaquero wearing ALICE gear while riding a stock horse was amusing. Andy and family were enroute and Bob and Alice were already here. Ramón with his family appeared and asked if there was any room in the Inn.

We had the space but it would have to be in the beds set up in the basement. He didn't say how, but he was up to 5 cases of 175gr Black Hills match BTHP and 1,500 rounds of 200gr +P Speer Gold Dot. That bullet is the basis for the Corbon 'flying ashcan' round. He had his patrol rifle, an AR-15A2. While we could take a can off an HK416, I didn't have the right Fast Attach Adapter.

It was easier to loan him a HK416 or HK417, we had a dozen of each. Ramón chose the HK416, presumably because the ammo weighed less. I gave him a set of ALICE gear.

"You seem to be set."

"The only thing I didn't get was the M67 hand grenades."

"You know I'm in Logistics for the Arizona National Guard?"

"I wasn't aware of that. How does that help?"

"How many cases of M67s?"

“Ten or 12.”

“Rockets?”

“You can get those?”

“Can you settle for M136 AT-4?”

“Does *never look a gift horse in the mouth* answer your question?”

“Smoke?”

“No, but I have 3 different brands in the trade goods.”

“I was referring to smoke grenades. We have purple, yellow, white, red and green. What we don't have is concussion or incendiary. “

“Why not?”

“Backordered due to the budget cuts.”

“Okay, whatever we can get.

“Drive me up to Camo Navajo. We'll borrow an M35 2½ ton or a 5 ton.”

“Camp Navajo is where?”

“A few miles west of Flagstaff on I-40.”

“Let's take another driver and get both. They're multi-fuel?”

“Jet fuel, diesel fuel and gasoline.”

“Hank, Cal; arm yourself for a trip to Flagstaff. Bring 2 canteens and 2 MREs.”

“I hate those.”

“Then draw some Mountain House entrees and sides. Come to the dome when you're ready.”

“Ten minutes.”

Hank brought an HK417, with both X-Products 50 round drums, 20 20 round H&K magazines (a full case of Black Hills preloaded) and his Natchez Bowie.

“I’m going to do my best to skirt most of Phoenix.”

“Are they rioting there too?”

“I don’t know and I don’t want to find out.”

“How long will we be gone?”

“That’s hard to say. About 4 hours up, 1-2 hours to collect the supplies and about 5 hours back.”

“I’ll tell Julie and grab a four quart canteen and more rations.”

“We shouldn’t be gone that long.”

“From what you just said, at least 11 hours if we don’t run into trouble.”

“Is everyone here this paranoid?”

“Ramón, just because you’re paranoid doesn’t mean they aren’t out to get you.”

“In that case you’d better bring your Tac-50.”

“Good idea, I’ll be right back.”

“What did you bring for ammo for your cannon?”

“I brought ten rounds of AP and 90 rounds of Hornady A-MAX.”

“Are we ready yet?”

“Yep.”

“In that case, let’s get this show on the road.”

“You know that it wouldn’t be difficult to add a mike 2 alpha 1 and mike 240 bravo with tripods. I know how to headspace the extra barrels for both and know where to get the tools needed.”

“One of each?”

“One mike 2 and 2 mike 240 bravos. I’d better check on the concussion and thermate while we’re at it. It’s possible the orders were filled.”

The outcome of the jaunt was the 3 machine guns, 12 cases of M67 (360 total), 120 thermate, 120 concussion, 32 M136 AT-4 and, of all things, 20 cans of Mk 211 MP. We

only took the 2½ ton truck because it all fit. Ramón became excited when he noticed M183 demolition charge kits containing 16 M112 charges and 4 four priming assemblies and carrying case. We took all we could locate.

Although there were demonstrations in Phoenix and Tucson, they were contained by the local authorities. What wasn't contained was the Arab Spring. That was of no major effect in either city according to the news. Then again, the news is not always right. While doing a head-count on the cattle we came up two short. Hank found where the fence had been cut and crudely repaired.

Those 2 steers represented a loss of approximately \$2,500. We started sending out night riders, in pairs, equipped with night vision. It happened again 3 weeks later after we stopped using night riders, bringing the loss to \$5,000. The first time is shame on you; the second is shame on me; and, the third is shoot, shovel and shut up. Did we have an inside man on the payroll or clever rustlers?

We never found out because the rustling stopped. Which brings me to a point of reflection; in terms of the ranch buildings and the dome, everything was done in anticipation of a Global Thermonuclear War. Hasn't happened! Have you ever noticed that on the National Geographic show *Doomsday Preppers* each family/individual seems to be preparing for a different disaster?

Jerry D Young has a list possibilities and it's probably up to 180, or close. TOM, by contrast, is totally focused on one possibility GTW. Grand focuses on various collapses of society. *Normal* was a collapse of world society while *By Law* and *Second Chance* were failures of our society. When and if he finishes *Lucky*, we know the focus of that story. Freedom of the Hills is focused on avoiding dealing with the bad elements of our society by living in the mountains.

Ginger put me on the straight track to success. Growing alfalfa was big business. Growing Black Angus beef would be a big business when we expanded our herd to the carrying capacity of our ranch. Meeting Ginger was the best thing that ever happened to me and it pulled me out of my mourning over Carolyn. We had to stop at 3 children due to circumstances. It didn't matter; we only had 3 twin bedrooms on the third floor of the dome. Because the dome became progressively smaller the higher one went, those had ¾ baths and the rooms were smaller. There was room for a twin bed, dresser, desk and a flat screen TV mounted on a wall.

The former generator room in the basement had been converted to a queen bedroom with a bed, dresser and vanity. The electrical/battery room and the storage room for POLs and spare parts had been converted to dormitories. Unfortunately, there was a single ¾ bath in the basement. Ginger and I decided that there enough bathrooms to go around and didn't try to reengineer a second basement bath.

As far as the rustling went, we filed a report with the Pinal County Sheriff and filed an insurance claim for stolen property. What they didn't pay would be a write-off on our income statement and, eventually, our taxes.

The rioting was contained, one city at a time, using the military to put down the Insurrection. That took care of everyone except the Muslim extremists who went underground along with their associates. Obama declared the Insurrection was over and the military went back to their posts, bases, stations and forts, as applicable.

The Arizona National Guard began an investigation over the missing supplies from Camp Navajo. The wiped down, empty M35 was located parked on a dirt road near Cottonwood. It was a dead end. Ramón went back to work and Maria and the kids returned to Eloy. Eloy is close to the ranch and it wouldn't take long for them to return.

We went back to baling alfalfa and raising livestock. The best solution to building a herd is to retain the heifers and or gilts. We kept both until we had 30 sows and every female Black Angus heifer born on the ranch. The next time we butchered, our dairy cow went to the butcher as a source of boneless for the ground meat. We had settled on 10% aka ground sirloin.

A fresh Black Angus cow became our new milk cow. We had added a machine that pasteurized and homogenized the milk. The first stage was basically a blender and the second stage heated the milk to 161°F for 15 seconds. The milk was then stored in one gallon plastic jugs. The jugs were recycled using very hot water to clean them and kill any microorganisms. They didn't have an infinite life and we stored new jugs against need.

The milking, treatment and bottling were handled by one of the wives. The women, with Ginger in charge, planted the garden, harvested the crops and canned or froze the produce. We had added a sharp freezer that took the corn and peas to -60°F quickly and the frozen vegetables were stored in Ziploc style vacuum bags.

Robert was right about the canned beef, it was excellent. So were the canned beef stews and other canned meat products. We bought canned beef tamales directly from Hormel in Austin along with their Cure 81 hams and thick sliced bacon. It wasn't wholesale... but we got a volume discount. Bob and Alice decided to sell the Apache Junction home and move to the ranch. I had a footing poured for his antenna tower and his 'ham shack' was set up in their 2nd floor queen bedroom.

The 2nd floor bedrooms were all the same size and the slightly smaller queen bed left space for a table to hold his radio equipment. His US Towers Mast was the same height as ours, 85' and could be lowered and tipped over as necessary. When the concrete pad was ready, we sent 4 hands up to help Bob move the tower and antennas. They were assigned a stall in the garage and they set their own remote codes for the door opener.

Hank and Julie used 2 stalls for their car and his pickup and the used utility tractor I bought along with a plow and straight disk, the Troy-bilt rototiller in the one stall with the gardening equipment and racks to hold the rakes, shovels, hoes, etc. were moved to the pole building style machine shed that housed the John Deere tractors and the wagons when not in use. The vacant stall was currently reserved for Alan's vehicle. Ramón was left to make do with outside parking.

While the 6 stall garage was conventional block construction, there was a 2nd floor where we stored the empty jars, plastic jugs and etc. We concluded that it wasn't cost effective to make EMP proof. The less expensive option was spare ignition components. It took a chunk of change before we had 2 sets of replacements for each vehicle.

We made a massive buy of tires and spare wheels. There was a mounted set of spares for each vehicle and an unmounted set. Shelves were installed in the machine shed for all of the non-electronic parts and the electronic parts went into the dome or employee shelter, in Faraday cages.

Ginger and I both had a sinking feeling, down deep, that what had happened to this point in time was the visible portion of a massive iceberg. Bob and Alice tended to agree. Despite our tagging the M21s and handguns for Bob and Alice, Bob bought Alice her own Hi-Power and a Kimber for himself. They also bought a pair of Ruger SR-556 carbines for CQC and equipped them with EOTech sights. He did lay claim the M21 with his name on it and a Mossberg.

Bob didn't care for the 3" shotgun shells and bought 3 cases of 2¾" shells, all Remington. He had 1 case of slugger slugs and 2 cases of 8-pellet 00 buckshot. Considering his age the choices were appropriate. They even had their own knives, the Cold Steel Recon Tanto San Mai III.

With 2 ham shacks; the one in the den saw the most use. Presumably because most of the equipment was identical except for the business band radios. He must have gotten a wild hair and licensed 3 unused channels on the Motorola radios. He went two steps further, buying as many CP-200s as we already had. By the time he was done, the CM-300s were programmed for the 4 licensed channels and 28 unlicensed channels. Our original CP-200s were programmed for the 4 licensed channels and 12 unlicensed channels and the new CP-200s were programmed for 16 unlicensed channels. His explanation was "backups."

What the heck, Public Enemy #1 was leaving us alone; we might as well have the FCC picking on us. Around the ranch, we only used the 4 licensed channels and 5w on the portables and 25w on the mobiles. Ramón stopped by periodically, just to visit and to keep in our good graces so they had a place, just in case. He had managed to acquire an upper for his AR-15 with a gas piston and an A1 lower so he told me he no longer needed the HK416. On duty, he used the issued the AR-15A2 Government Carbine with the 1:7 barrel.

His new upper had 1:7 so he could use the heavier bullets and the gas piston kept his receiver cleaner. I swapped the tag on the HK416 from Ramón to Maria. He'd eventually change his mind. I also tagged a HK417 with Ramón on the tag. His new upper didn't have a piston adjustment for a suppressor. Suppressors don't totally silence the shots; they do make you invisible.

Due to Ramón and Maria and their 2 children, we decided to order more FM50s in large and medium with suits, boots, tape and gloves in adult sizes. It was only money and we weren't short on money. It would be better spent on lifesaving supplies and precious metals than accumulating Federal Reserve Notes. Gold and silver had taken a downturn on the markets so we jumped in with both feet. We also added additional LTS and STS foods.

The few MREs we had reached their life expectancy and were discarded. The Mountain House products were better and had a longer shelf life. We had an assortment of no. 10 cans and the pouches which replaced the MREs.

We never had problems with our employees and Ginger and I attributed that to all those perks and benes they had working for us: free housing, free food, free transportation to perform their jobs (horses, etc.), communications equipment and equipment to provide for the common defense. Basically, they had to buy their clothing and not much else. We had a group health insurance policy equal to the best the industry offered and we paid the full premium.

Yes, they were only paid about \$12-\$15/hr, but when one counted in the perks and benes, they were very well paid. We had a good tax man and their W-2s only showed their wages. We were probably making an enemy of the IRS too, but what's new. The meat was charged off at cost, not retail. So, we lost a little income. We had happy employees and that was much more important. Our Vaqueros and ranch hands never considered quitting either. Why should they, they were raking much more than any other job they could get and we supplied the ammo.

There had been some discussion of late about Yellowstone. It was experiencing swarms as it does occasionally. We didn't give it much thought considering the distance from there to here and the ash bed patterns. Yes, Arizona had gotten ash from all three Yellowstone eruptions as well as from the Long Valley eruption. We assumed with the wind typically Westerlies, we had little to fear.

The Westerlies or the Prevailing Westerlies are the prevailing winds in the middle latitudes between 35 and 65 degrees latitude. These prevailing winds blow from the west to the east to the north of the subtropical ridge, and steer extra tropical cyclones in this general manner. The winds are predominantly from the southwest in the Northern Hemisphere and from the northwest in the Southern Hemisphere. They are strongest in the winter when the pressure is lower over the poles and weakest during the summer and when pressures are higher over the poles.

Eloy is located at 32° 45' 49" N, 111° 36' 0" W, Phoenix is located at 33° 27' 0" N, 112° 4' 0" W and Tucson is located at 32° 13' 18" N, 110° 55' 35" W. With that in mind we weren't worried. If there were an eruption, we might get a light dusting but the volcanic ash could be tilled in and enrich the soil.

The largest eruption of Yellowstone had been the first, Huckleberry Ridge. Mesa Falls was slightly over 11.5% of that and Lava Creek was about 41% of the first. Speculation in the media was that they were growing in size and the next might equal or exceed Huckleberry Ridge. You know how the media has become in the age of instant news... if they don't have the facts; they speculate and always assume the worst.

"Anything to be worried about honey?"

"Ginger, I doubt it. It would be a strange set of circumstances for us to get much ash here if Yellowstone did blow. If we have a Low, the winds would be blowing counter-clockwise due to the Coriolis Effect. A moving Low with the upper part positioned at Yellowstone could blow more ash our way than usual. I can't see that happening."

"But, it's not impossible?"

"No, it's not impossible. Frankly, I'm more worried about the ongoing Arab Spring. They lay low for a while but based on news reports, they are beginning to surface. We're so far off the beaten path, I doubt we'll see them but the hands are carrying their M1As and M1911s."

"So there are various concerns to deal with?"

"There are always concerns. How much food did you ladies put up this year?"

"Plenty. We bought a ton of wheat, mostly hard white with some soft white and durum. We also bought corn and oats to convert into food products. That's in addition to what we have stored in the LTS foods. Let's see, what else? Chilies from New Mexico of several varieties, beans from the Dakotas, small and large white and pinto beans primarily, Cheddar cheese and pepper cheese from Wisconsin and American cheese slices from Kraft. I have a list if you want to see it."

"Did you buy what we need for the next year?"

"At least one year, possibly a bit more."

"Then, I don't need to see the list. We have the steers and dairy cow at the butcher. We'll take in the hogs after. Did you remember to place an order with Hormel?"

"Yes; 120 full Cure 81 hams, multiple cases of the thick sliced bacon and 10 cases of beef tamales. I don't see why you won't just eat the tamales our ladies produce."

“They’re too big to suit my taste. I do love those Hormel beef tamales.”

“I guess so, you eat a full can in one seating.”

“It is probably equal to eating 3 of the tamales the ladies produce. You have a good handle on the refried beans and the Spanish rice and that’s one of my favorite meals along with one or two Chile Rellenos.”

“No New York Strips or filets with prawns?”

“Definitely for a special occasion. What are prawns running these days?”

“Don’t ask. Every time I go to the store, they’re more. That reminds me, you need to make a run to the liquor store and you might as well buy kegs instead of Pony kegs. In fact buy 2 of each.”

“Okay, why?”

“Since you insist of having an end of week meeting to cover what’s happened over the past week and the bar is open, you have 10 people drinking beer rather than just you.”

“What do the ladies drink?”

“Margaritas made with Cuervo gold, triple sec and fresh lime juice.”

During the night the NWS radio came alive.

The USGS has raised the warning level for Yellowstone Caldera. The volcano advisory has been raised to a volcano watch. Aviation color code has been raised to orange. Increased earthquake activity indicates the magma is rising towards the surface. Please keep your weather radios on for additional announcements.

“How high do they go?”

“Warning and Red. Did you check the weather?”

“The Weather Channel says there’s a slow moving low just coming in. The ground speed should put the northern edge close to Yellowstone within the next 24-36 hours.”

“Grab your coat, it’s getting cold out. Get Julie to watch the kids. Tell her we’ll be back in 3 hours.”

“Where are we going?”

“Tucson; its closer. I know a store that carries Coors kegs and an excellent array of booze.”

“You’re thinking about liquor at time like this? Are you crazy?”

“Practical.”

It didn’t take as long to get there or back and the hour I allowed for stocking up, took half that. We were home in less than 90 minutes. The kegs went into a small walk-in I had installed in the employee shelter. The liquor, the mixes and extra soft drinks were stored in the basement storeroom.

“Hank, how long to round up the stock and get them in the barn?”

“Two hours tops. It will be crowded. Yellowstone?”

“Just in case it blows. There’s a Low moving through and, if the Weather Channel is right, we could be in the wrong place at the wrong time.”

“Counterclockwise rotation?”

“Exactly.”

“They just finished the round bales and I’ll get the equipment in the pole shed. The Vaqueros will get the horses in followed by the hogs. That will only leave the cattle. We can lock the layers in the hen house.”

“How are we on fuels?”

“Topped off yesterday. We got the propane while you were gone. Where did you take off to?”

“Tucson. Personal business.”

“Right 4 kegs, a case of Jack Daniels, a couple of mixed cases of liquors and liqueurs and a ton of soft drinks and mixes. Personal business my aching hind end.”

“Would you buy employee morale?”

“I would if there was anything to justify the end of week meetings.”

“I’ll try to think of something.”

We had a fair amount of practice getting ready for Post-Apocalyptic world. Each time over the past years we’d missed it happening. We could cross our fingers and hope to God we’d miss this one too. God must have been listening, Yellowstone settled down.

The USGS reduced the level from a watch back to an advisory. We assumed it would be reduced to normal.

The USGS has lowered the warning level for Yellowstone Caldera. The volcano warning has been lowered to a volcano advisory. Aviation color code has been lowered to yellow. Decreased earthquake activity indicates the magma has slowed rising towards the surface. Please keep your weather radios on for additional announcements.

“I thought we were past that.”

“I’m going to hold off on having Hank getting the livestock rounded up. We should have plenty of time to do that if it happens.”

The USGS has raised the warning level for Yellowstone Caldera. The volcano advisory has been raised to a volcano watch. Aviation color code has been raised to orange. Increased earthquake activity indicates the magma is rising towards the surface. Please keep your weather radios on for additional announcements.

The next morning...

The USGS has continued the warning level for Yellowstone Caldera. The volcano advisory is a volcano watch. Aviation color code is to orange. Continuing earthquake activity indicates the magma is rising towards the surface. Please keep your weather radios on for additional announcements.

Later that day...

The USGS has raised the warning level for Yellowstone Caldera. The volcano watch has been raised to a volcano warning. Aviation color code has been raised to red. Increased earthquake activity indicates a possible eruption. Please keep your weather radios on for additional announcements.

The Dome Chapter 10

Hank had started gathering the stock when the USGS went back to watch. Twenty minutes after the warning notice came, we were buttoned up. With the phone lines being jammed, Bob had to reach Andy on 40 meters. Andy told him with the Low taking the ash to the west they had plenty of time to take care of business.

They'd had fair to good crops for 2014. He sent a check which Ginger applied to the balance and we again reduced the balance by \$26,000. A few years and Andy would own the section free and clear since we were writing off 1.625% of the loan each year. It was good land and in a really good year profits were high.

We'd managed to buy gold and silver every year with only the amount varying. We had a LOT. On the other hand, you couldn't eat it. That profit realized in 2012 had simply bought more fractional gold Eagles. The price of gold was being driven by foreign demand.

China has a ferocious appetite for Gold now. In 2012, Hong Kong shipped 94% more gold to the mainland than they did in 2011. They are buying all the gold they can get and China's gold councils have projected by 2015, China's demand will outstrip their supply by 550 metric tons. There are approximately 2471 tons of gold mined annually around the world. China mines approximately 403 tons of that. That means within 2 years' time China will be buying almost half the gold mined. Keep in mind the law of supply and demand.

It took time for the ash to reach southern Arizona; but reach us it did. Communications were basically out due to the ash and static in the air. The tunnel system allowed us to move around tending to the livestock. Hank had put the layers in chicken coops and the coops in the barn. He released the chickens after that. Finding the eggs became a challenge.

As time passed the ash began filtering out of the air. The eruption was estimated to be about 2,500km³. That would be about the size of Huckleberry Ridge. The Low was pushed east by a High with clockwise winds and we got a double dose.

"We're going to have to plow those 1,280 acres, get the soil tested and reincorporate the needed nutrients."

"We don't have a plow that big."

"I suggest you contract the plowing and disking. We'll take it from there with mounted rototillers."

"How much production are we going to lose?"

“Quite a bit. There’s an upside, we can incorporate the manure before we rototill and replace the exhausted humus. Your best bet would to plant grass seed and let the live-stock graze a year. Then we can rototill it next year and seed it with alfalfa again. We’ve pushed the envelope about as far as we can.”

“What about the current grazing land?”

“We can try to wash most of the ash off. My first choice would be to do those 540 acres of grazing at the same time and the same way. It will be ready to use faster since we only need to wait for a good crop of grass.”

“Okay, let’s do that.”

When the contractor was finished plowing and disking the 1,820 acres, we spread manure on the 540 and used our two John Deere’s with rototillers mounted to till those 540. Soil samples were taken and when we got the results, we had the necessary chemicals incorporated before we sowed the grass seed.

It seemed like they’d never finish the 1,280 because they had to spread the remaining manure and rototill it in. It took a while for the multiple soil samples to be analyzed and get the necessary chemicals incorporated. It was about what we thought, potassium and phosphorus. We would get a crop, possibly 4 cuttings. They should be good due to refreshing the soil.

“You weren’t out much Cal, despite alfalfa being a perennial, it was getting time to plow and replant anyway. Besides, that volcanic ash will enrich the soil.”

“So, it was a blessing in disguise?”

“Yes and no. The soil is better for it and it probably cost less to plow and disk this year than it would have in 2 years. You should still make a profit but your tax load will be much smaller.”

“Every cloud has a silver lining?”

“If might not have been the case Cal, we could have gotten more ash. We might not have had the dome and employee shelter for this once in a lifetime experience. Off the top of my head, I can’t think of much we couldn’t handle. Well, of course, a direct hit by a nuke or that asteroid that created the Meteor Crater. The way this place is laid out we could hold off a substantial force if it ever came to that.”

“Let’s hope we never have to find out.”

“Amen, brother.”

It could have been that way, but for those radical Muslims. In Iraq and Afghanistan, it was the Fedayeen in Iraq and the Taliban in Afghanistan who fought the 4th Generation War. The US and its allies played at that game too with their Special Ops forces. Fleet Marine Field Manual 1-A describes 4th Generation War. It is a concept developed by William S. Lind in the 1980s. Fourth Generation Warfare teaches the soldier/marine the best methods of dealing with insurgencies.

In another context, it could teach one how to become an insurgent and how to avoid the traps laid by the opposition who are trained in fighting a 4th Generation War. However, if the opposition is skilled, the best bet is to hang up your AK and wait for the next time.

“Cal, can you come to the dome?”

“On my way; what’s up?”

“It’s better if you see for yourself.”

“Okay, what couldn’t you put over the radio?”

“Look. That’s a bridge across the Mississippi River in Davenport, Iowa. I-80 is a major thoroughfare isn’t it?”

“Yes, about the same as I-90, I-70, I-40 and I-10; I think each crosses the Mississippi.”

“The announcer said it was bombed. Another announcer suggested we hadn’t seen the last of the radical Muslims.”

“If someone succeeded in taking out the other 4 bridges, we’d be in a world of hurts. I don’t know how much traffic they carry; but, it’s probably the majority of the east-west commercial traffic.”

“How long did it take them to replace that bridge in Minneapolis that fell?”

“Not long. The replacement of the collapsed I-35W Mississippi River Bridge crosses the Mississippi River at the same location as the original bridge, and carries north-south traffic on Interstate Highway 35W. It was constructed on an accelerated schedule, because of the highway’s function as a vital link for carrying commuters and truck freight.

“MN DOT announced on September 19, 2007, that Flatiron Constructors and Manson Construction Company would build the replacement bridge for \$234 million. Construction began on November 1, 2007. I-35W Saint Anthony Falls Bridge was opened to the public on September 18, 2008. The I-80 Bridge is about 3,500’ compared to the I-35W Bridge which was 1,900’. It will probably take twice as long and cost at least double.”

“How long are the other bridges?”

"I'll look it up."

"Okay, I-90 crosses at Lacrosse, Wisconsin and is ~2,500' long; I-70 is under construction and will be 2,800' long; I-270 crosses the river at Granite City, Illinois and is ~5,400' long; I-40 crosses at Memphis and is ~19,500' long; and, I-10 crosses at Baton Rouge and is ~14,150' long. I only looked those Interstates we discussed but there are many more bridges crossing the Mississippi."

"But if someone takes out those 4 remaining bridges, it's Katy bar the door, huh?"

"Right, the US is broke and they need a billion to replace bridges? Do you suppose Obama will veto the spending bill?"

"He just might be the horse's hind end that he is. How many does this make?"

"How many what does this make?"

"Disasters; you know Tired Old Man and his theory that bad things happen in 3s."

I added them up, Bob's heart attack that forced him to stop farming, the 2013 drought, the Presidential Determination, the Executive Order, ATF visit, the rioting/insurrection, Yellowstone and the bridge destruction. When we added up the total, we realized that 8 disasters of one sort or another had happened; some personal, some further reaching. Ginger said that left one.

"And if we get 10?"

"We'll get another 17."

"Not in this lifetime. No ma'am, no way."

"I'm just telling you what he claims. His friend Clarence seemed worried about an asteroid event."

"Is Clarence a fictional character?"

"No, they were people he knew in AA, Clarence Floyd and Ron Brown his sponsor. David Murphy tagged them with the handle *The Three Amigos* and it stuck."

"So that story *A Friend of Bill's* was based on his alcoholism?"

"Based, no; probably inspired by. He started counting his sobriety January 2, 1999. If he's not drinking, he has 15 years and is working on 16."

Several significant events had occurred over the past few years. Not all of them had a direct effect on us. The Presidential Determination and Executive Order, the riot-

ing/insurrection and the I-80 bridge destruction had no immediate personal effect on us. If Ginger was right, I'd better keep them on the list because 8 minus 4 is 4 meaning we had 5 more to go, not 1. I was only counting those that affected us both.

We reduced our alert status back to normal; you know... cowboy guns instead of M1911s and M1As. We rechecked our food supplies and ordered more, especially the grains, beans and rice. We checked everyone's freezers and butchered 1 beef and 2 hogs to fill the corners. We also ordered from Hormel in Austin, double our normal order... 120 cure 81s, 20 cases of beef tamales and 12 cases of thick sliced bacon. Ginger thought it was a good time to load up on Jimmy Dean sausage and got as many pounds of sausage as bacon, e.g. twice as many packages.

Ginger talked me into relenting and the Winchesters were all passed out, leaving us with the 1886s. Most of the .45-70 was .45-70 Magnum - 405 gr JFN, 2,000fps, 3,597 ft lbs. They said *the bullet utilized expands to an inch or more in diameter at our velocities and hence penetration is limited to about two feet in flesh and bone. This is the single most effective hog and black bear load ever devised in .45-70. I don't use it on animals weighing more than 800 lbs as it won't give adequate penetration at bad angles for animals larger than 800 lbs. If you'll limit yourself to broadside (double lung) and CNS hits, this load will work on 2,000 lb animals.*

The recoil simply has to be endured as it was significant. Each hand had an 1892, as did Ginger and I, accounting for the 11 purchased. Ginger, Hank and I also carried an 1886 in case of large rattlesnakes... but truthfully, just because. If you've counted the Ruger Vaqueros, we bought 4 on the first trip to Tombstone, 3 in Phoenix and a bunch (17) more in Tombstone. We bought 8 each of Winchesters right off the bat and 3 more in Tombstone.

We had 12 M21s but I gave one to Ramón and later replaced the M21 and the Kimber along with the Loaded and the PT1911B. So, we had 24 Loadeds and 24 PT1911Bs at the moment along with 12 M21s and 12 Kimber's and 30 Mossberg's. And, we had additional pallets of ammo from Hornady, Speer, Brenneke, Remington and Buffalo Bore; enough for 2-3 long drawn out wars.

Why? Ever heard the term gun nut before? Can I help if Tired Old Man and I have similar tastes? I'll give it to him on his choice of Main Battle Rifles; the M14 was one of the best. Developed as an upgrade to the M1 Garand during the 1950s, and replaced by the plastic Mattel toy gun in the 1960s it's still first choice for people like the Big D, SEALs, Force Recon, Army Special Forces, etc. A 2009 study conducted by the US Army claimed that half of the engagements in Afghanistan occurred from beyond 300 meters. America's 5.56x45 mm NATO service rifles are ineffective at these ranges; this has prompted the reissue of thousands of stock M14s although common modifications include scopes, fiberglass stocks, and other accessories.

All of our M1A rifles, regardless of model, have McMillan fiberglass stocks. The high end match rifles have scopes to match and our 2 Tac-50s also include night vision. The

only reason the M21s don't have night vision is the idea of putting a \$10,000+ optic on a \$4,000 rifle, excluding accessories. The previous version, the Universal Night Sight, cost over \$10,000 too, so to get a Night Vision sight with the Generation III ITT Pinnacle tube was cost prohibitive at the moment. Plus the MUNS was still LEO and military only and we were lucky we had 2.

One out of diapers and soon, all three. Alright! A few accidents and no more messes to clean up. Family life is great and the money is finally rolling back in. We still have to wait up to 30 days for the alfalfa checks, but they're fairly regular. They finally raised taxes and our tax guy adjusted the estimates accordingly. I'm really starting to hate the IRS. They're right there on my list with the ATF and FCC. Obama hasn't done himself any favors with his second term cabinet, either.

Ginger and I met in 2008 and married within a week. We had a very active late night life which mellowed with the years. I wasn't 31 anymore and was closer to 40 (38). We were well to do, primarily because of Ginger talking me into ranching, which mostly turned out to be growing alfalfa. We kept our herd of sows at 30. Our beef herd was over 100 cows and growing. Three more years, four tops, we'd have 300 cows and reach our goal.

My latest concern is not something I've shared with anyone. I mostly got the idea from a story. In that story a thinly disguised Nancy Pelosi worked herself into the position of President and did all sorts of unacceptable things. That included trying to drum up a National Emergency so she could suspend national elections. Tony put one between her eyes and that ended that. I wonder if Obama or Biden read Patriot Fiction. Even if they didn't, they could easily dream up something like that on their own. Can you see anyone voting for Biden as President in the 2016 elections? The 2014 elections cut the Senate majority to 1, the independent.

Where the independent agreed with the Republicans, rarely, Joe Biden broke the tie and the Democrats took the vote. While there was resentment against the House members who *caused sequestration*, the Republicans had increased their majority slightly in the House. Apparently the people weren't buying what Obama was selling. The further into his 2nd term he got, the lower his popularity. When sequestration kicked in, he fell below a 50% approval rating. Was Obama trying to get more unpopular than Bush (88% disapproval)? Keep in mind, Boehner had reservations about the 2011 law.

I wasn't giving any consideration to possible problems on the ranch, life was good and getting better, as the expression goes. Bob spent most of his days in my den at the radios and was still a part of a 40 meter net based in the Phoenix area. The word went out on the net about a 'radical Muslim group' that got into a firefight with Phoenix PD. Sheriff Joe wasn't involved because he had to retire after he'd broken his shoulder.

The group had an SUV and a van and no one knew how many were involved. The only thing they were sure of was the 2 vehicles were southbound on I-10. When Bob showed up carrying his M21 and wearing the Kimber, I knew something was up.

“Armed for bear?”

“Muslims.”

“What do Muslims have to do with us?”

“There’s a SUV and van southbound on I-10. Don’t know how many people but they have AK-47s.”

“RPGs?”

“My friends didn’t say. If there was ever a time to lock and load, this is it.”

“Are you serious?”

“As a heart attack.”

“Ginger, put the word out. Rendezvous at the dome with the MBRs. I’m coming in for my HK417 and Tac-50.”

“What’s going on?”

“Possible Muslim invasion? Best you just do it and wear your body armor. Lay out mine while you’re at it.”

“Really, what’s going on?”

“Your Dad picked up a conversation on the 40 meter net about a shootout between the Phoenix PD and some radical Muslims. Last he heard before arming up and coming to see me was that they were southbound on I-10. Maybe you should get in the sand-bagged fighting position on the top of the dome. Keep your eyes peeled for a SUV and a van.”

“Cal, you’re scaring me.”

“Good. That means you’ll be careful. Take your choice of one of the H&K rifles.”

“The 417 has better range. I’ll do that with the X-Products magazines. Do you think 10 25 rounders’ will be enough or should I take 20?”

“Take your Tac-50 with 20 mags of Raufoss and come back down and get the HK417 and all the magazines you can carry.”

I told you, life was good and looking better. We had 20 Tac-50 magazines loaded with Raufoss and another 20 loaded with the Hornady A-MAX. We spent enough with X-Products to get a discount. The same applied to McMillan.

“Cal, I see a SUV and van exiting I-10 at the Eloy exit. They’re southbound on South Barrett Road.”

“Hank, tell everyone to grab an H&K and lock and load. Hurry, you have maybe 3 minutes, max.”

“Cal, I already passed all 20 out. Everyone has 30 loaded magazines, 6 frags and 4 smoke.”

“Anyone have an M136 AT-4?”

“I have 4.”

“Do not initiate contact. I repeat, do not initiate contact. Let the Arizona Highway Patrol deal with them.”

“Too late Cal, they slowing down and looking for a place to hide.”

“And naturally behind the dome is the perfect place.”

“So it would seem.”

“Engage them only when they pull in. El Degüello!”

“Are you sure?”

“Did we invite them to this party?”

“Good point.”

Every hand had their H&K set at full-auto and rather than the 2 X-Products magazines, now carried 6 plus 10 20 or 30 round magazines. Just as the van pulled in behind the SUV, Hank hit it with an M136 AT-4 followed quickly by a hit on the SUV. The survivors straggled out totally disoriented. Some were wounded and some not. Some were armed and some not. They ran into a wall of copper coated lead. Each and everyone one of them was shot multiple times. Rather than waste the expensive Black Hills ammo, we used Cold Steel to end the suffering of any still alive.

We started checking our people for wounds. Only one was wounded, Ginger; who took a FMJ through her triceps and it wasn’t squirting. In fact it barely brushed a minor vein. Within 3 minutes law enforcement was on the scene taking charge. All of our people were holding M1A Loadeds or M21s.

“Those look like full auto wounds.”

“We were jacked and probably pulled the triggers as fast as possible.”

“Lieutenant, these people are friends of mine,” Ramón intervened. “They do have Springfield Armory M1As, both the Loaded M1As and the M21s. They’re simple ranchers and I think we owe them a debt of gratitude.”

“What did they use on those vehicles?”

“Probably dynamite, let me ask.”

“Cal, what did you use on the vehicles?”

“C-4; they don’t make dynamite anymore.”

“Where did you get that?”

“From an explosives dealer. I can’t remember which one but I could check our records.”

“Good enough Lieutenant?”

“Not really, but I intend to give them a pass. Hell, they’re heroes and we don’t need any more bad press.”

Ginger healed and only sported two minor scars. We cleaned and stored the military style weapons against future use. Ammo stocks were checked and refilled. While the shootout didn’t take much ammo, we still practiced regularly.

Ramón was considering leaving the Highway Patrol and asked my opinion.

“Ramón we could use a Chief of Security around here. Are you bilingual?”

“I speak English, Spanish and college French. My French is only so-so.”

“We can put in a doublewide similar to Hank’s. He’s due for a raise and I can offer you the same. We pay 100% of the insurance premiums, free housing including free utilities and food, \$42,000 cash wages. The house comes equipped with an upright freezer and gun safe. About all you have to buy is fuel for your vehicles and clothing.”

“Only \$42,000?”

“Figure rents at \$800+ a month for an apartment, another \$9,600. You probably spend \$5,000 a years on food. We also supply all the ammo. Overall that’s a wage of over \$60,000.

“I’ll talk to Maria.”

“The school bus runs right by the place.”

“And there’s no doubt the ranch is secure?”

“Ginger’s Dad is a Ham and monitors the amateur bands all day long. That’s how we knew we had trouble headed our way.”

“I’ll let you know tomorrow or the day after.”

“I’m going to go ahead and order the doublewide because if you don’t take the job someone else will.”

When he came back, he had Maria with him.

“Cal, it’s an attractive offer and we appreciate it. However, we just can’t do it at \$42,000.”

“Okay, what would it take?”

“We agreed we’re for it at \$48,000 with annual cost of living adjustments of 6%. You do pay cost of living raises don’t you?”

“We haven’t since most of increases in the cost of living are borne by us.”

“Then, I’m sorry. We can’t accept less.”

“Alright, done deal; I’ll have to make adjustments to our pay schedules so everyone is treated equally. They had the home in stock and it should ready to go in a week to 10 days. It’s a 4 bedroom, 3 bath home at 2,880ft². It has a large activity room, which eliminates one bedroom, plus a den. The master bath has an oval tub and separate shower. A nice bonus feature is a large pantry. We’ll locate it on the other side of the dome.”

“Office space?”

“I think a block building built like the others. I’ll give you a budget for furnishings but I suggest something durable on the order of Steelcase or Hon. You’ll be equipped with a full set of firearms, ammo and communications gear. It will probably be easier to put in another tower. Hank will share the office with you. The 2 of you will be equal in the pecking order with you having the first say in Security and him having the first say in Ranching Operations. Security will be number 1. I’ll cover that with him.”

“You just hired yourself a cop.”

The Dome Chapter 11

“Hank, we’re hiring Ramón as head of Security. That will put you in charge of Ranching Operations. With the new title comes a pay raise to \$48,000 plus an annual 6% cost of living adjustment. All the other hands will be given an immediate 6% COLA and the future COLAs will be effective January 1st, of the each year.

“I am having an office built using the double wall construction we favor and adding a third radio tower so you’ll have full communications capability. If you don’t have a Technicians license, let me know and I’ll give you the study guide. We’ll put in two gun racks and each of you will be fully equipped. Security will be and will remain our number one priority until this country gets itself straightened out.”

“You’re kidding yourself if you think that will happen anytime so.”

“That’s why we hired Ramón when he came to talk to me about a job. From now on, channel 21 will be assigned to the Vaqueros and channel 24 to the other farm hands. We’ll use channel 28 for Tactical-1 and channel 32 for Tactical-2. For extreme situations, deduct 10 from the assigned channel numbers. There will be scanners in the office, our home, your house and Ramón’s.”

“Can you afford to do this?”

“Can I afford not to? Everyone will be armed with a sidearm and long arm at all times.”

Business must have been slow, Jacob got right on the block building and I ordered an AV-150 with spare filters and Swiss blast door. We used the spare Swiss blast door and would replace it in inventory when the new one came in. Ginger ordered the 85’ tower and assorted antennas. She also ordered a complete set of communications gear for the office and duplicated what Hank had at home for Ramón and Maria’s new home.

The additional PV panels on the home and office begged for yet another battery bank because we were producing far more power than we consumed. We added the tenth battery bank giving us 10 banks with 168,000 amps each... 1,680,000 amps at 48vdc (80.64mw). The inverters had better efficiency than we thought. With the dome, 10 manufactured housing units, the garage, the double barn, the power house and the new office, all wired for 200/100 amps at 120/240 and the battery banks were fully charged more often than not.

The PV panels produced more power than we normally used during daytime hours and the wind turbines were set to automatically kick in when the PV panel output fell below a specific level. Our property, in its entirety, cost far less than Bill Gates home on Lake Washington. He’s rich, we’re well off.

Keep rollin', rollin', rollin',
Though the streams are swollen,

Keep them bales a rollin', rawhide.
Through rain and wind and weather,
Hell bent for leather,
Wishin' my gal was by my side.
All the things I'm missin',
Good vittles, love, and kissin',
Are waiting at the end of my ride.

“Now, I can understand hiring Ramón for Security and Maria will be a welcome addition; however, how much is this going to end up costing?”

“One final battery bank, PV panels for their home and the new office, the communications things you ordered, enough inverters for 100 amps of 240vac and one wind turbine. There will be the tunnel to connect the office to the other tunnels and of course the COLAs starting immediately for the hands and every January 1st for everyone. We won't need any firearms but we'll probably need more ammo. Let's see, more tack for him and his family, including scabbards and all that.”

“Is that it?”

“Did I forget something?”

“Five years of food for a family of 5.”

“They only have 2 children.”

“She's pregnant and maybe that's why he wanted to change jobs.”

“What do you mean?”

“I mean less risk for more money.”

“He can call the entire Arizona Highway Patrol if he has a problem.”

“Maybe; if he has a problem here, how far away is help?”

“Oh, probably much closer than another Highway Patrol Officer.”

“Did you promise him transportation?”

“Of course.”

“How much does a Chevy Tahoe SUV cost these days?”

“Uh, I don't know; why?”

“That’s what he drives, with the police package.”

“But, it’s not like Missouri where the vehicles rust out.”

“Now you’re reaching.”

“Do you object to hiring Ramón?”

“No, I am just giving you a hard time. You could have just asked what I thought instead of talking to Ramón and then Ramón and Maria and agreeing to what they wanted without consulting with, no make that telling, me what you were doing.”

“I’m sorry, really. I should have brought to you when I made him the offer. And then, I got caught up in the idea of having a Security Chief that I bought the doublewide figuring if not him, someone else. I do wish you would have said something when I suddenly wanted more communications equipment, a third tower and so forth and so on.”

“I will if something like this comes up again.”

That ended the conversation. I knew to discuss my proposed actions with Ginger and she knew to question me if I seemed to have a head of steam built up and following the line of, ‘Damn the torpedoes, full speed ahead’ (David Farragut at the Battle of Mobile Bay, paraphrased).

Occasionally I tended to have a one track mind. Examples might be the large accumulation of M1A rifles, H&K rifles, or, Ruger Vaqueros and Winchester rifles. Or, my unspoken attitude of more was better. We hadn’t had time to set up the M2A1 or either M240B. We did use 2 of the M136 AT-4s to good effect. If we could afford the best, why not use the best as defined as Black Hills ammo and the Hornady 750gr A-MAX. And, Speer wasn’t bad ammo either.

Offering to buy Ginger a drink was the smartest move I’d ever made. Keeping her happy was a pleasure. If it was to remain like that, I’d better mind my Ps and Qs (“mind your manners”, “mind your language”, “be on your best behavior” or similar). Unless Clarence’s rock hits us on the head or someone nukes us we should be relatively safe here on the ranch.

I believed that right up to radical Muslim invasion. We prevailed. How could we not? However it left me ill at ease, especially since Ginger was the only one on our side injured. Did Cal overreact? Overreacting is far better than ignoring what happened. I could rationalize the decisions I made or just forget about it and concern myself with the price of hay and how much beef and pork were bringing on the market.

After a time, the beer purchases were adjusted to a 3:1 ratio between Coors and Coors Light, plus 2 cases of Millers Genuine Draft. Ginger continued to buy 1 or 2 liqueurs at a time until we essentially had some of everything and 2 bottles of what she liked. I had

storage racks constructed in the closet for the bar, just to hold the liqueurs, arranged alphabetically, by name. The bottles were held in place by bungee cords in case of an earthquake.

Depending on how one counted, the Muslim invasion was either number 9 or number 5. Best case, we were done; in between and we had 4 to go; and, worst case we had 18 to go. I just went ahead and bought a Chevy Tahoe SUV in white and had the doors lettered, "Security" and "C ∞ G Ranch". That's the infinity sign aka Mobius. C bar G was just too... common.

We ended up adding radios to Hank's new Silverado and a scanner to the Tahoe. The Silverado's doors were lettered "Ranch Operations" and "C ∞ G Ranch" Both vehicles had police style upright shotgun racks and across the front seat M21 rifle racks. And, everyone on the ranch of legal age had a concealed carry permit. We required it and we paid the fees. Ramón was licensed to teach the training class.

Arizona is classified as a "shall issue" state. Even though Arizona law allows concealed carry by adults without a permit, concealed carry permits are still available and issued by the Concealed Weapons Permit Unit of the Arizona Department of Public Safety for purposes of reciprocity with other states or for carrying firearms in certain regulated places.

Requirements for issuance include taking a training class or hunter education class, submitting a finger print card, and paying a \$60 fee. Applicants must be at least 21 years of age. New permits are valid for five years. Permits issued before August 12, 2005 are valid for four years. Renewing a permit requires only an application and finger print card. However, effective December 31, 2007 the finger print card requirement for renewal ended. We submitted them anyway. Arizona recognizes almost all valid out-of-state carry permits, with few exceptions.

Although that seemed to end the radical Muslim activities in Arizona, it didn't end them around the US. That's an assumption, no one was claiming credit anymore; they were more discreet. Another Mississippi bridge fell, the I-40 Bridge at Memphis... the long one. A few months later, the I-10 Bridge at Baton Rouge went down. Transportation routes were being taken out will no one claiming credit. Was it the radical Muslims or homegrown terrorists?

Would you be surprised to learn that the answer was "Yes"? They were second and third generation Muslims who had seen the light and adopted the 'true' ways of Allah and Muhammad his prophet. Their number wasn't great, numbering in the low thousands... perhaps 0.1 percent of the total Muslim population in the United States. They weren't insane as defined by, "doing the same thing over and expecting different results". While they did do the same thing over, they seemed to get the same results; the bridges went down.

Was it possible that some had served in the US military as Engineers and learned to use explosives? Anything is possible and it was just another lead being tracked down by an overworked Federal Bureau of Investigation. As another federal agency, they were hit with sequestration, too.

It was getting harder to keep our ducks in a row due to the growing livestock herds, hay sales, hay pellet and grain purchases. The laptop definitely needed to be replaced with a powerful desktop, the data transferred and the laptop used solely a mobile device. It worked... it was just slow and we're looking at a quad core processor with 16Gbs of ram and Windows 7 SP3 with twin internal 3Tb drives. Drive C: (OS) for regular use and drive D: (BACKUP) for Windows backup. None of the business computers were connection to the home network or Internet. No Windows 8 allowed!

"Ramón, I need you to inventory our munitions stocks and propose any additions we need to make. Just count the full cases first and then the partial cases. Each rifle should have 6,000 rounds of the appropriate ammo, which means 175gr for the M21s and 168gr for the Loadeds. Since the HK417 has 1:11, we'll use 168gr in those and 62gr in the HK416. That Speer +P seems to be a good choice so stick with the +P loads we're using. Check with Bob on his 12 gauge ammo since he prefers the reduced recoil loads. Otherwise, Get Brenneke 3" Black Magic 1 $\frac{3}{8}$ oz slugs and Remington 3" 15 pellet 00 and 41 pellet no. 4 buckshot. Oh, and round down. I'll take care of ordering the Buffalo Bore for the Ruger Vaqueros and Winchester rifles.

"Are the weapon racks installed in the office?"

"I'll do that after I finish the inventory."

"It's not as glamorous as being an Arizona Highway Patrol Officer is it?"

"Right, no more high sped chases, no more conducting truck inspections, no more responding to officer needs assistance calls and no more innocent or belligerent drivers."

"Cal, there's a letter from Black Hills Ammunition. I opened it and they're offering discounts on their new ammo in 5.56, 7.62 and a few other loads to large volume customers due to being overstocked."

"Ramón is inventorying the ammo at the moment. I was going to call Buffalo Bore and place an order for .45 Colt and their .45-70-405."

"We're using awfully expensive ammo to routine practice."

"True. It's like the food, use what you buy and buy what you use."

"Speaking of food, Mom and I are running up to Phoenix early tomorrow to fill in the STS foods and get something nice for dinner. Anything you need?"

“You could get a case of Jack Black, 6 cases of Squirt and 6 cases of Coke Classic. Did you check the other booze?”

“Yes, and we could use a case of Crown Royal, a case of Seagram’s 7, Seven-up and various mixes. Want me to replace the empty kegs of Coors and Coors Light?”

“If you would and it’s not too much trouble.”

“No trouble. We’re taking the Suburban and that used enclosed trailer you bought. We’re buying for 12 families counting Mom and Dad. I already put in Hormel and Jimmy Dean orders.”

The next day Ramón gave me the ammo inventory. We decided on a mixed pallet of Black Hills and the same of Speer. We’d go to Speer FMJ for practice. I’d already ordered from Buffalo Bore.

“Don’t tell me, you’d rather have it and not need it than need it and not have it?”

“Yep.”

“Could you give me a hand installing the weapons racks? Hank said everyone was tied up at the moment and he was helping with the horses replacing horseshoes.”

“I’ll get the toggle bolts and be right out. You get a ½” drill with a 7/16” masonry bit.”

After we had the weapons racks mounted and the firearms secured, Ramón asked if I’d had heard about the latest bombing.”

“Another Mississippi bridge?”

“Not this time. I don’t know how familiar you are with Los Angeles. Do you remember the Freeway Bridges the Northridge Earthquake brought down in 1994?”

“Which ones?”

“The Route 14 and I-5 Bridges.”

“Yes. It took a while to get them replaced. I thought those were engineered to withstand an 8.0 quake.”

“I don’t know about that but they got them with shaped charges and the damage is more extensive than the earthquake caused. Sort of makes a person wonder about all those bridges up in Phoenix.”

“Radical Muslims?”

“That’s what mainstream media is speculating. Heard another piece of news; Congress finally implemented the actions called for in the Budget Control Act of 2011. That will end the sequestration; and it should eliminate any chance of Obama declaring a National Emergency and suspending elections.”

“I hope so but knowing him, he’ll think of something.”

“Not likely Cal, he’s a lame duck.”

“Maybe, but I’d be happier if he was out of office or a dead duck. And, no I am not suggesting someone should shoot him. If he was dead, we’d have Joe Biden in charge and I can’t think of anything worse.”

“Right, let’s just get through the 2016 elections and see if the people have had enough of the Democrats.”

Not only did we fill the holes in our ammo supplies, we took advantage of the prices and bought a year’s worth of practice ammo. Things seemed to calm down until New Year’s, 2016.

“This is NORAD, *Pinnacle – Nuclash, Pinnacle – Nuclash, Pinnacle – Nuclash* at 32° 41’ 57” N, 117° 12’ 55” W, time hack 080515 Zulu.”

“STRATCOM concurs, *Pinnacle – Nuclash at 32° 41’ 57” N, 117° 12’ 55” W*, time hack 080515 Zulu.”

Keep in mind that Eloy is located at 32° 45’ 49” N, 111° 36’ 0” W, almost due east of NAS North Island where the detonation occurred, or as close as they could get on East Harbor Drive. They had detonated a warhead from an SS-19 aka UR-100N (mod 2). The original version of the SS-19 is MIRV’d. Mod 2 had a single 5mt warhead so the distance between East Harbor Drive and NAS North Island was insignificant.

The distance, as the crow flies, from San Diego, CA to Eloy, AZ is ~325 miles on a course of 89.4°. With an average wind speed of 10 mph, the radiation would take ~32½ hours to arrive. With an average wind speed of 15 mph, the radiation would take ~21⅔ hours to arrive. With an average wind speed of 20 mph, the radiation would take ~16¼ hours to arrive. To allow for variable winds with gusts, call it any time after 15 hours.

“You heard?”

“Everyone heard Cal. I have the Vaqueros moving the horses and cattle close to the barn. We already have the sows in the barn. Good thing we sold off the pigs 3 weeks ago and sent hogs and steers to the processor. It’s nice to have a full freezer. Are there any last minute items we need?”

“I think we’re set Hank, thank you. You’ll be in the dome with us?”

“Actually, I thought maybe I should be in the employee shelter and Ramón should operate out of the dome. The thing about it is that the only radios are in the dome and office building and Bob is an old time Ham. He may know some tricks the rest of us don’t.”

“I have some data on radiation that I’ll have to find Hank. I’ll let you know when I do.”

I eventually found it in a story:

When the bombs went off, the wind was out of the west at about 15mph. Here’s the damage caused by each bomb:

Wind speed: 15 mph
Wind direction: due east
Time frame: 7 days

3,000 Rem

Distance: 30 miles

Much more than a lethal dose of radiation. Death can occur within hours of exposure. About 10 years will need to pass before levels of radioactivity in this area drop low enough to be considered safe, by US peacetime standards.

900 Rem

Distance: 90 miles

A lethal dose of radiation. Death occurs from two to fourteen days.

300 Rem

Distance: 160 miles

Causes extensive internal damage, including harm to nerve cells and the cells that line the digestive tract, and results in a loss of white blood cells. Temporary hair loss is another result.

90 Rem

Distance: 250 miles

Causes a temporary decrease in white blood cells, although there are no immediate harmful effects. Two to three years will need to pass before radioactivity levels in this area drop low enough to be considered safe, by US peacetime standards.

Radius of destructive circle: 1.7 miles

12 pounds per square inch

At the center lies a crater 200 feet deep and 1000 feet in diameter. The rim of this crater is 1,000 feet wide and is composed of highly radioactive soil and debris. Nothing recognizable remains within about 3,200 feet (0.6 miles) from the center, except, perhaps, the remains of some buildings' foundations. At 1.7 miles, only some of the strongest build-

ings – those made of reinforced, poured concrete – are still standing. Ninety-eight percent of the population in this area is dead.

Radius: 2.7 miles

5 psi

Virtually everything is destroyed between the 12 and 5 psi rings. The walls of typical multi-story buildings, including apartment buildings, have been completely blown out. The bare, structural skeletons of more and more buildings rise above the debris as you approach the 5 psi ring. Single-family residences within this area have been completely blown away – only their foundations remain. Fifty percent of the population between the 12 and 5 psi rings are dead. Forty percent are injured.

Radius: 4.7 miles

2 psi

Any single-family residences that have not been completely destroyed are heavily damaged. The windows of office buildings have been blown away, as have some of their walls. The contents of these buildings' upper floors, including the people who were working there, are scattered on the street. A substantial amount of debris clutters the entire area. Five percent of the population between the 5 and 2 psi rings are dead. Forty-five percent are injured.

Radius: 7.4 miles

1 psi

Residences are moderately damaged. Commercial buildings have sustained minimal damage. Twenty-five percent of the population between the 2 and 1 psi rings has been injured, mainly by flying glass and debris. Many others have been injured from thermal radiation – the heat generated by the blast. The remaining seventy-five percent are unharmed.

That's for a 1mt bomb. A 5mt bomb might be double that although certain things wouldn't change much if any. The blast radii would be larger, but the amount of radiation would probably remain the same. Since the weapon was a ground burst, the amount of fallout would be significantly more than an air burst. The source of that data was one of Tired Old Man's stories.

I had a second source, no doubt written by a nuclear physicist, that I had found at FAS.org. <http://www.fas.org/programs/ssp/nukes/nuclearcalculators/cloudmodel.pdf> Why bother, the wind was right out of the west, variable speed averaging 15mph and gusting to 20mph... 15 hours maximum.

Unless a Low came in from the ocean, Tired Old Man would be secure in Palmdale; assuming he's still alive. The front of a Low blows north and the backside south. That was discussed when Yellowstone had an explosive eruption. By the way, it did make the soil better in the end. That could have been the alfalfa plowed under, the ash, the chemicals or the manure or a combination.

Andy called and Ginger assured him we were okay. We were close to being buttoned down and wouldn't have to expose ourselves to radiation because the ranch could run for years on the stored power. Then in what I can only classify as a whimsy, she told him the half section was his free and clear. Of course that was what was set out in her will; was she expecting to not make it through the fallout?

"You sounded like you don't expect us to make. We're safe as a baby in its mother's arms."

"Are you sure?"

"Of course, a dome is the second strongest structure there is."

"Which means it will stand hurricane force winds, right?"

"Sure it will."

"What's the radiation protection factor?"

"It's 8" of concrete for crying out loud."

"How much concrete does it take for a halving factor?"

"I have no idea."

"Well, I do and the answer is 2.4 inches. Eight divided by 2.4 is $3\frac{1}{3}$. Two raised to the $3\frac{1}{3}$ power is 10. That means that if the outside radiation is 90 R/hr, we'll be getting 9 R/hr inside."

"That can't be right."

"You forgot a step Cal, the earth sheltering over the dome. If you'd have buried the dome in 6 feet of earth, you'd have increased the exponent to $23\frac{1}{3}$ and given us a protection factor of over 10 MILLION!"

"Hank do we have time to bury the dome in six feet of soil?"

"Why?"

"I screwed up. The actual dome only has a protection factor of 10."

"I don't know how much we can get done in 13 hours, but we'll do it in layers."

"Every foot of soil increases the protection factor by 2 to the power of 3.333333 and it's exponential. Do as much as you can."

Check it out, 1 feet of soil raises the protection from the soil to 2 to the 3.333333 power or 10. Combine the concrete and 2 is raised to the 6.666666 power or 100.6. Since I've always believed more is better, if we can get 48 inches of soil, the protection factor goes to 2 to the 16.666666 including the concrete for a protection factor of ~104 thousand. Those last 2 feet of soil raise the protection factor to 2 to the 23.333333 power or 10.5 million. That explains why Jacob built that long airlock; uh, duh.

“Finished with 2 hours to spare.”

“Is the soil compacted and did you put out the probes for the remote radiation meters?”

“Yes on the soil and what probes?”

“Didn't think so; so I put out the probes for the AMP 200 (0.5R/hr to 10,000 R/hr), AMP 100 (0.005 R/hr to 1 000 R/hr) and the AMP 50 (10 μ R/hr to 4 R/hr). Don't worry about it, I ran the costs as business expenses. These are newly produced meters, not something that was new before Nixon was President. I have TOM's spreadsheet I copied off Jerry's CD too. The original version is on TOM's CD. I like it because the cells aren't protected and you can change the N factor.”

“Huh?”

“I'll show you if we have to do it.”

The Dome Chapter 12

“So, now are we as safe in a baby in its mother arms?”

“Barring outside factors, yes.”

“Outside factors?”

“One. What if Obama uses this as an excuse to declare a National Emergency and all that follows the Declaration? Two. What if Obama decides it was state sponsored instead of the work of radical Muslims and attacks another country? Three. What if Obama decides this is the perfect opportunity to disarm the American public which didn't really happen despite Joe Biden's posturing? Yes, they changed the rules concerning background checks but didn't outlaw the weapons they wanted to or the high capacity magazines.”

“Those are very good questions.”

“And, the answers are?”

“Beats me, but they are very good questions.”

Our radiation peaked at 119 R/hr. Keeping in mind that the original radiation level in San Diego was 3,000 R/hr, we plugged 3,000 into the spreadsheet and saw that we were right on the money for 15 hours and 15 minutes. Following the spreadsheet down, we'd reach 300 mR/hr at 100 days and reach the magic number of ~104 mR/hr at 241 days. The wind speed was an average of 21 $\frac{1}{3}$ mph, unusually high.

With the tunnel system there was no reason to leave the protected areas until the radiation was well below 104 mR/hr. The livestock didn't like being cooped up. Nature smiled on us because the cows hadn't been bred and neither had the sows. The grain mixes were augered into the barn and no one had to go outside for grain. There was sufficient alfalfa hay in the loft to get us to 100 days. Livestock have a greater resistance to radiation than humans and we planned to let them into the dry lot at 100 days.

However, to do that, several of us had to suit up and fire up the high capacity pump and use a pair of 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ " fire hoses and nozzles to wash down the dry lot. When the AMP displayed very slight readings, we let the livestock out for the first time in 100 days. The fallout had the appearance of very fine grit not unlike the volcanic ash. It had a bonus, gamma rays.

“What I should have done with the soil I bladed out to form the pond was to use it to cover the dome. I obviously misunderstood what Jacob was telling me. He kept saying, ‘after you get the soil compacted be sure to seed it to keep it in place’.”

“You're just going to have to turn in your blue tights and red cape.”

“I ain’t Superman, huh?”

“In some way, yes; in others you’re just an ordinary human being. I’m getting tired of disasters; can we give it a rest?”

“What’s that bright spot in the sky?”

“Venus.”

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The Dome II – Chapter 13

I checked the light in the sky every night. It seemed to be getting bigger.

“Ginger, would you take another look at Venus?”

“Why?”

“I’ve been watching it and it’s getting bigger.”

“Hogwash, Venus is in a stable orbit.”

“Humor me and I won’t bring it up again.”

“See, Venus is over there and the same size as when you asked.”

“Not that Venus, the other one. It’s to the left about 15°.”

“That is bigger. Why didn’t you bring it up sooner?”

“It wasn’t growing that fast and after what you said, I wanted to be sure.”

“Hum, what was that movie?”

“What movie?”

“*A Fire in the sky* starring Richard Crenna. The gist of the story was that Phoenix was hit by a Comet.”

“I didn’t see that.”

“It was a TV movie, not theatrical release.”

“When was that?”

“Give take a year, 1978.”

“How much danger does it pose to us if it’s a Comet and does hit Phoenix?”

“I don’t know. Barrington Meteor Crater between Winslow and Flagstaff isn’t all that big and it’s very shallow. CNN claimed the depth was due to a slower than anticipated speed. I don’t believe we’ll know until whatever this hits... assuming it does.”

My fellow Americans

Several Observatories have been tracking a Comet that recently appeared from behind the Sun. Speculation is that the Comet originated in the Kuiper Belt. The Observatories include Kitt Peak National Observatory in Arizona, Cerro Tololo Inter-American Observatory in Chile, the telescopes on Mauna Kea and the radio telescope at Arecibo Observatory in Puerto Rico.

Comets are icy small Solar System bodies that, when passing close to the Sun, heat up and begins to outgas, displaying a visible atmosphere or coma, and sometimes also a tail. Current estimates are that this Comet is on the order of 4 kilometers in diameter and that it will strike the planet Earth in 4 days in North America. Further observations will pin down a more accurate strike point.

My office has been in consultations with Moscow and Beijing discussing the possibility of striking the comet with ICBMs moments before it enters our atmosphere. The final conclusions were that such a strike would cause more problems than the comet strike itself, not the least of which would be massive electromagnetic pulses.

The best scientific minds in the world estimate that by the time the Comet grounds, it could be as small as 400 meters.

This office will keep you informed as more data is analyzed and more useful information becomes available. No evacuations are planned at this time in light of Hurricane Rita in 2005. We fear that we could be evacuating people from zones of safety directly into the path of the comet.

Thank you and good night. God Bless America.

“What’s the word Boss?”

“Trouble with a capital T. Hank, get the livestock moved close to the barn but hold off locking them down beyond a holding area until we know more. Ramón, has the ammunition been delivered?”

“Delivered, counted and stored Boss.”

“Good. Move us to Yellow Alert and issue the military weapons. Both of you make sure that everyone knows where to shelter if it becomes necessary. On the off chance that Comet hits this ranch; none of our preparations are going to mean much. That said we’re only 3 square miles out the 3,784,100 square miles that make up the US. The odds should be in our favor.”

“What are our odds?”

“The odds of the ranch getting hit are 1 in 1,261,337. I didn’t do it in my head, I used a calculator. Get busy; we only have about 96 hours.”

“Cal, do you think there’s any reason to make a trip to Phoenix to fill in the loose ends we have in food and supplies?”

“The population of metro Phoenix is about 4.5 million; are you sure you want to get into that mess?”

“That’s why I asked. Tucson might be a better alternative.”

“What are you looking for?”

“Very little food... a few odds and ends we usually buy at Costco in the commercial size packages. Feminine Hygiene, bath tissue and a bit of extra booze to cover the partly empty bottles and a couple of kegs.”

“Ok, but I’m going with you and we’ll pull our trailer in case something comes to mind. I’ll get Ramón to assign two people to accompany us for security.”

“Weapons?”

“Handguns with the shotguns and H&Ks in the truck. Full combat load out, our load out, not the military’s.

Ginger went with a Monarch Shoulder rig for a Hi-Power and 3 backup 13 round (surplus) magazines plus a Gerber Mark I she bought used off the Internet. She also had her Galco purse with another Hi-Power and 4 13 round magazines. Her H&K was a HK416 with 2 drums plus 13 magazines. I went with the Kimber in a Monarch Shoulder rig with 3 backup magazines and a Cold Steel FGX Boot Blade I. I had a Hi-Power for backup in an IWB holster with 5 13 round magazines total... one in the handgun and additional in a pair of double magazine pouches. We both had PPKs in .380acp on our left ankles and a double magazine carrier on our right ankles.

We stopped at the closest Costco in Phoenix and did one stop shopping. The store wasn’t that busy and I wondered aloud if anyone in Phoenix had heard the announcement. After a stop at our favorite liquor store, we stopped at a second Costco. This one was fairly busy, but we didn’t really need much and loaded 2 flats with Charmin and checked out.

“Do you think we should try a third store Cal?”

“I think it’s too risky. More people seem to be getting the word and we could run into riot.”

“Hey you two, some of that crowd are headed this way.”

“Let’s boogie!”

“Good idea, Cal. Shotgun?”

“Keep it handy until we’re on I-10.”

When shots rang out, nearly deafening me, I realized our two security personnel were firing over the heads of the approaching people in an attempt to keep them at bay. That always a good way to make friends and influence people... Once we cleared the parking lot of the second store; it took only minutes to get on I-10 and headed home. It was full dark when we pulled in and we checked the sky when we dismount the crew cab.

“It’s bigger, isn’t it?”

“So it appears. I wonder when they’ll release more data about the probable impact area.”

“Have good trip?”

“We got most of what we went for but it got exciting towards the end when people began to get off work and hitting the Costco stores. We hit one Costco, the liquor store and a second Costco for more Charmin and coffee. It was getting crowded so we skipped the coffee. It’s good we took security because it started getting dicey after we loaded our purchases from the second store. Your guys ended up firing over the heads of a growing crowd.”

“I have two more people waiting to help you unload and store everything.”

“Ok Ramón, the booze goes in the dome and everything else in the other shelter.”

We had the TV on as we ate a quick supper of macaroni and cheese with peas as a side dish.

My fellow Americans

The expected impact area for the comet has been refined and the indications are it will strike the southwestern US or northern Mexico. As these calculations become more accurate, the results will be released to main stream media.

To ensure continuity of government, select officials will be sheltered at Mount Weather. My office feels that dissemination of the new information will be speeded by eliminating my office reviewing the new results.

Thank you and good night. God Bless America.

“Coward!”

“Cal, that wasn’t very nice.”

“He just waited to see where in North America the comet would strike so he could figure out which hole to crawl into. If it had been the east coast, Air Force One would be at Peterson Air Force Base instead of Marine One being at Mount Weather.”

Later that day, Fox News announced that the strike would be within a 300 mile radius of Phoenix, Arizona. The comet was closer to 3 kilometers in diameter than 4 kilometers and the probable impact object was closer to 300 meters in diameter; assuming it didn't all vaporize in the atmosphere! The DOE immediately ordered Palo Verde nuclear generating station to shut down its 3 reactors. This nuclear power plant is a major source of electric power for the densely populated parts of Southern Arizona and Southern California, e.g. the Phoenix-Scottsdale, Tucson, Los Angeles, and San Diego metropolitan areas.

The ranch is located about 67 miles south of central Phoenix and 52 miles north of Central Tucson. Shutting down Palo Verde didn't affect us other than our disconnecting from the grid. With all the wind turbines, PV panels and submarine battery banks, we had more power than we could use.

With the announcement of the target area for the comet, our odds changed. A circle with a 300 mile radius covers 282,735 mi². Our odds were now 1 in 188,490. Which brings me to the point that all the PAW fiction writers emphasize, it doesn't matter what you have for a shelter if you take a direct hit. The odds of our getting hit were higher than getting a Royal Flush, which were 1 in 649,739. Fortunately, they were lower than getting any other poker hand, so one can hope.

“It looks like it is coming straight at us.”

“While I don't know, Ginger, I'd imagine that it will be like that until it gets much closer.”

“We should have moved outside the 300 mile radius the moment Fox announced that. We could still leave, you know.”

“Climb up on the dome and check out the traffic on I-10.”

“Bumper to bumper?”

“Yeah, in both directions; people seem to be assuming it will hit Phoenix like that movie you told me about. You should have paid better attention when we came home. Fox or one of the other stations should have a more accurate estimate tomorrow. The thing I don't understand is why they don't have a more accurate estimate at the moment. We both saw *Deep Impact* and *Armageddon*, and while *Deep Impact* had a more accurate scientific basis, *Armageddon* did better at the box office.

“I looked both movies up on Wikipedia and was led to another page, *Asteroid impact avoidance*. It said, and I quote

“Most deflection efforts for a large object require from a year to decades of warning, allowing time to prepare and carry out a collision avoidance project, as no known planetary defense hardware has already been developed. It has been estimated that a velocity change of just $3.5/t \times 10^{-2} \text{ ms}^{-1}$ (where t is the number of years until potential impact) is needed to successfully deflect a body on a direct collision trajectory. In addition, under certain circumstances, much smaller velocity changes are needed. For example when it was believed there was a high chance of 99942 Apophis swinging by Earth in 2029 with a 10^{-4} probability of passing through a 'keyhole' and returning on an impact trajectory in 2035 or 2036. It was determined that a deflection from this potential return trajectory several years before the swing by, could be achieved with a velocity change on the order of 10^{-6} ms^{-1} .

“An impact by a 10 kilometers (6.2 mi) asteroid on the Earth has historically caused an extinction-level event due to catastrophic damage to the biosphere. There is also the threat from comets coming into the inner Solar System. The impact speed of a long-period comet would likely be several times greater than that of a near-Earth asteroid, making its impact much more destructive; in addition, the warning time is unlikely to be more than a few months. Impacts from objects as small as 50 meters (160 feet) in diameter, which are far more common, are historically extremely destructive regionally (see Barringer crater).”

“What, the Meteor Crater is a target site?”

“It's within the 300 mile radius. The Meteor crater is located at 35:01:38N 111:01:21W and Phoenix is located at 33:32:33N 112:04:17W. Indo gives a line of sight distance of 119 miles on a heading of south-southwest, 210.7 degrees, from the crater to Phoenix.”

CNN provided the next report and the target area was still Phoenix, but the radius had dropped to 140 miles. Blitzer stated that a further refinement was expected within an hour. We switched back to Fox and they were repeating the same announcement, 140 mile radius around Phoenix. Neither of us can stand Wolf so we left the TV on Fox and I told Ramón to keep the TV in their office staffed 24/7 and to broadcast updates on the Business Band radios. I also specified they watch CNN.

“All points, this is Ramón. CNN is reporting a change in the impact point to 20 miles north of Phoenix and a decrease in the radius to 95 miles.”

“That matches Fox and puts us just on the edge, Cal.”

“What aren't they telling us, Ginger?”

Brit Hume was providing the Fox coverage. He stated that the speed of the comet had been under estimated and now appeared to be traveling at 15 kilometers per second due to the effect of Earth's gravity. The object that excavated Meteor crater was a nickel-iron meteorite about 50 meters (55 yards) across. The speed of the impact has been

a subject of some debate. Modeling initially suggested that the meteorite struck at up to 20 kilometers per second (45,000 mph), but more recent research suggests the impact was substantially slower, at 12.8 kilometers per second (28,600 mph). It is believed that about half of the impactor's bulk was vaporized during its descent before it hit the ground. Impact energy has been estimated at about 10 megatons. Estimated time to impact was 46 hours and shrinking.

It was Friday afternoon, time for the weekly meeting. One person was holding down Hank and Ramón's office and four were riding the circuit around the ranch. A sixth individual was in the OP atop the dome and the remaining adults were gathered in the dome nursing drinks. The younger children were in the employee shelter being attended to by the teens.

During the 2 hour meeting, we were updated twice. The first update changed the impact point from 20 miles north of Phoenix to 25 miles north of Phoenix. The second update reduced the radius of the strike area from 95 miles to 80 miles.

"Does that put us in the clear?"

"Close, but it might depend on the amount of speed the thing generates. Hume said it appeared to be accelerating due to the Earth's gravity."

"He's guessing."

"I've never had the impression that he guessed about things. When he was doing *Special Report* he posed hypotheticals but I never saw him guess. All we have to do is wait 2 or 3 more hours to know whether the ranch is in the strike zone or not."

"And, if we're not?"

"If that's the case, we're still waiting for number 9."

"I thought we were at 5 and this would be 6. How big was the thing that created Meteor crater?"

"Fifty meters."

"So, what's worse, 300 meters at high speed or 50 meters at a lower speed?"

"I'm guessing here, but 300 meters at high speed. That's assuming it doesn't melt when it comes through the atmosphere. Comets are ice and the asteroid that created Meteor crater was a nickel-iron asteroid. It just occurred to me; could this comet affect the San Francisco volcanic field?"

"When was the last eruption there?"

“Nine hundred-fifty years ago ± 40 years.... I looked it up when I went on Wikipedia.”

“Another bad habit you picked from TOM.”

“What bad habit?”

“Looking everything up on Wikipedia.”

“The article on Meteor crater said the strike released about 10 Megatons of energy and that very little of the asteroid remained in the crater. If it doesn't hit near here, we won't even get rain out of the deal.”

“That's why we have irrigation wells Cal.”

The Dome II – Chapter 14

The Comet struck north of Phoenix in the area of that old town Marty Robbins sang about, Agua Fria, where the Arizona Ranger shot Texas Red.

*To the town of Agua Fria rode a stranger one fine day
Hardly spoke to folks around him didn't have too much to say
No one dared to ask his business no one dared to make a slip
for the stranger there among them had a big iron on his hip
Big iron on his hip*

*It was early in the morning when he rode into the town
He came riding from the south side slowly lookin' all around
He's an outlaw loose and running came the whisper from each lip
And he's here to do some business with the big iron on his hip
big iron on his hip*

*In this town there lived an outlaw by the name of Texas Red
Many men had tried to take him and that many men were dead
He was vicious and a killer though a youth of twenty four
And the notches on his pistol numbered one an nineteen more
One and nineteen more*

*Now the stranger started talking made it plain to folks around
Was an Arizona ranger wouldn't be too long in town
He came here to take an outlaw back alive or maybe dead
And he said it didn't matter he was after Texas Red
After Texas Red*

*Wasn't long before the story was relayed to Texas Red
But the outlaw didn't worry men that tried before were dead
Twenty men had tried to take him twenty men had made a slip
Twenty one would be the ranger with the big iron on his hip
Big iron on his hip*

*The morning passed so quickly it was time for them to meet
It was twenty past eleven when they walked out in the street
Folks were watching from the windows every-body held their breath
They knew this handsome ranger was about to meet his death
About to meet his death*

*There was forty feet between them when they stopped to make their play
And the swiftness of the ranger is still talked about today
Texas Red had not cleared leather fore a bullet fairly ripped
And the ranger's aim was deadly with the big iron on his hip
Big iron on his hip*

*It was over in a moment and the folks had gathered round
There before them lay the body of the outlaw on the ground
Oh he might have went on living but he made one fatal slip
When he tried to match the ranger with the big iron on his hip
Big iron on his hip*

The Agua Fria post office closed in 1895. When a new post office opened in 1898, the community was renamed Dewey, probably to honor Admiral Dewey's great victory that year at the Battle of Manila – this was the height of the Spanish-American War. Another post office was established at Val Verde (Humboldt) in 1899.

That's in case you're wondering what happened to Agua Fria. Some claim that Texas Red was an alias used by Billy the Kid. The Arizona Rangers were created by the Arizona Territorial Legislature in 1901, disbanded in 1909, and subsequently reformed in 1957. Billy the Kid died 20 years before the Rangers were first formed.

The work assigned to these Rangers was arduous and dangerous one. For many years sheriff's officers and vigilantes had found themselves entirely unable to cope with the lawless bands which made their headquarters in the badlands. But the condition of affairs had grown unendurable. The temerity of the outlaws was not only a scourge to the community, but a menace to the good name of the Territory. No man's sheep or cattle were safe from the raids of the organized bands of outlaws, who would sweep down on a range, drive away the cattle, reach the mountain fastnesses (strongholds) long before the posse could be organized for pursuit. Raids and murders had become so common that they were scarcely noted.

There were a dozen bands of the horse and cattle thieves, at the head of which were such men as 'Bill' Smith, the notorious Augustine Chacon, commonly called 'Pelelo', and the train robber, Burt Alvord. Yet within a year of the time of its organization, this little band of rangers, consisting of a captain, a sergeant and twelve privates, had practically cleared the territory of hundreds of bad characters.

Many of them had paid for their lawlessness with their lives and the rest had been driven across the line into Mexico... The Rangers are recruited from old cowboys and from the ranks of Teddy Roosevelt's Rough Riders. They have to be able to rope and ride anything on four legs, as their horses may be killed and remounts are at times absolutely necessary. Especially quick work is required in heading fugitives from the border. A crime is reported; the ranger slaps on the saddle and is away. To the credit of the ranger it may be said that nine times out of ten he brings back his man, dead or alive.

In 1957, a voluntary service organization called the Arizona Rangers was organized, founded with the assistance of four former members of the agency. The modern Arizona Rangers were officially recognized by the state of Arizona in 2002, when Arizona Governor Jane Hull signed Legislative Act 41. The purpose of this act was "to recognize the

Arizona rangers, who formed in 1901, disbanded in 1909 and reestablished in 1957 by original Arizona rangers.”

The present-day Arizona Rangers are an unpaid, all-volunteer, law enforcement support and assistance civilian auxiliary police in the state of Arizona. They work co-operatively at the request of and under the direction, control, and supervision of established law enforcement officials and officers. They also provide youth support and community service and work to preserve the tradition, honor, and history of the original Arizona Rangers.

Anyway, Dewey and Humboldt are no more and because the comet strike didn't affect us directly, we're at 9 or 5, depending on whether you ask me or Ginger. We had followed the news closely and knew that it was going to hit north of Phoenix. It was only as the comet approached the atmosphere that Brit Hume announced the expected target was the Agua Fria National Monument. It was an hour later that the news reported the destruction of Dewey-Humboldt and that the impact generated an estimated 15 Megatons (of TNT) of energy.

For whatever reason I began to think about not what we had, but what we didn't have in terms of military weapons. We had M67s, 6 colors of smoke, 40mm grenades, Mk3A concussion, AN-M14 Thermate and our homemade Molotov cocktails. What we lacked was M15 Willy Pete, M61 grenades, LAW rockets (which were essentially rocket propelled grenades), Javelin Rockets, M84 stun grenades and riot control gas grenades.

Our supply of Mk 211 MP was limited to 2,400 rounds although we were in excellent shape when it came to 5.56x45mm and 7.62x51mm. We also had the market cornered on .45 Colt and .45-70 from Buffalo Bore. We had more than enough M-21s but only two long range rifles, the Tac-50s. I'd heard good things about Vigilance Rifle's VR1 semi-auto chambered in .408 CheyTac and they were available with 5 or 10 round magazines. That cartridge should give us something better than the 7.62x51mm and .338 Lapua Magnum and less than the Tac-50.

A 1999 Justice Department Office of Special Investigations briefing on .50 caliber rifle crime identified several instances of the .50 BMG being involved in criminal activities. Most of the instances of criminal activity cited in the Office of Special Investigations briefing involved the illegal possession of a .50 BMG rifle. The briefing did not identify any instance of a .50 BMG rifle being used in the commission of a murder.

I started a list in anticipation of discussing the additions with Ginger. Plus, if we could get our hands on more of the HK416s and HK417s; so much the better. I also intended to buy up every Winchester 1886 in .45-70 and 1892 in .45 Colt that we could get our hands on. We really couldn't tackle armor if the government brought it to bear beyond using the Javelin missiles so I gave them a high priority. I'd discuss it with Ramón but really didn't want him to get in trouble acquiring the additional matériel.

“Cal, we checked the cattle herd and we’ve been hit by rustlers again.”

“How many this time?”

“Six head of almost market ready steers.”

“How close to market ready?”

“Right around 1,200 pounds.”

“Let’s drive up to Florence and talk to the Sheriff. Beef is up to about \$1.10 a pound and 7,200 pounds of beef is big bucks. Why wasn’t it discovered before?”

“Two reasons, the first being the Comet and the second being them doing a better job of hiding where they cut the fence. We almost missed the spot where they cut it this time.”

“Ok, grab your Winchester ’92 and Vaquero and let’s hit the road.”

“Honey, Hank and I are driving up to Florence.”

“What’s up?”

“We’ve been hit by rustlers again and lost 6 head.”

“Ouch.”

“Right. We’ll probably be gone about 3 hours at least.”

“Help you?”

“I sure hope so. We’ve had another 6 head of Black Angus rustled. Hank, do you have the ear tag numbers?”

“Right here boss.”

“Didn’t you have an earlier experience with rustlers?”

“We lost 4 head that time, so yes; we seem to be their favorite target in the area. I was thinking on the way up that if we got the ear tag numbers out, we might get lucky and catch them this time. Either that or they take all 6 head to the same processor. These cattle are just short of market weight and run about 1,200 pounds each.”

“You have that dome down by Eloy, right?”

“That’s us.”

“When did the rustling happen?”

“Best we can figure, the day the Comet hit.”

“We’ll get the word out to all agencies; but, I have to tell you it will be a long shot.”

“I’ll hold off on filing an insurance claim for 2 weeks and maybe you’ll get lucky.”

“If we catch them, you’ll prosecute?”

“Unless there something extraordinary about the circumstances, absolutely. Taking one head to feed a family that’s down on their luck might be extraordinary. Six head would be a stretch, even if the beef is recovered.”

“Ok, sign here and we’ll get it in the works. The yellow copy is for your insurance company.”

“Thank you Deputy.”

“Do you think they’ll get them?”

“We have an even chance Hank. I’ll have Ramón up the boundary patrols but I doubt the results will be different from the last times. You put someone on the fence, right?”

“It should be done when we get back.”

“I’ll be happy when things like this stop happening.”

“Things like this are what make life interesting, Cal. I wouldn’t hold my breath waiting for them to stop happening. At least you’re getting some of your insurance premiums back. Assuming they don’t cut you off for too many claims.”

“We don’t insure through Allstate Hank. Lord knows it would be cheaper on the surface but they have a reputation for doing that very thing. After the Northridge earthquake back in ’94, all the private insurers cut off California earthquake coverage forcing the state to control earthquake insurance.”

“We’re here and I’ll go check on the fence, Cal.”

“I need to visit with Ginger, Hank. A thought just came to mind.”

“I’ll mention the increased patrols to Ramón.”

“Okay, thanks.”

“Ginger, I just had an odd thought and I think only you can answer it. What’s status on the kids’ vaccinations?”

“Cal, they’ve had the full set of childhood vaccinations and the five of us get flu shots every year. What brought that up?”

“We’ve survived Yellowstone, a nuclear detonation and a Comet out of the Kuiper Belt. We’ve repelled a Muslim Extremist invasion and it occurred to me we should be concerned about the small things, like the common cold and seasonal flu.”

“We’re covered honey and we have enough Tamiflu and Relenza to give courses of treatment of both to everyone on the ranch and on Andy’s farm. Plus Sheree said they had full courses of treatments of both drugs too. Our clinic may only have a single bed, but we’re prepared for every disaster from the common cold to gunshot wounds to heart attacks. On the serious things, like heart attacks, about all we can do is stabilize and maintain while we wait for transport.”

“Who’s doing the treatment? I’ve only had a basic First Aid class.”

“Me for one, Ramón, Maria and Hank have all had Advanced First Aid and are Intermediate level EMTs. If you get shot in the heart, you’re going to die. Try to get shot in the head so all you’ll get is a headache.”

“Hey, I’m serious here!”

“Too serious, if you ask me.”

“I had another subject I wanted to bring up and discuss with you.”

“What caliber?”

“Well, among others .408 CheyTac. Look for whatever reason I began to think about not what we had, but what we didn’t have in terms of military weapons. We have M67s, 6 colors of smoke, 40mm grenades, Mk3A concussion, AN-M14 Thermate and our homemade Molotov cocktails. What we lack is M15 Willy Pete, M61 grenades, LAW rockets which were essentially rocket propelled grenades, Javelin Rockets, M84 stun grenades and riot control gas grenades.

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“Maybe he can refer you to the so called crooked supply sergeant. You’ll know when you find him and flash a little gold, his eyes will gleam greed.”

“It would be even better if we had a trustworthy cutout.”

“There is no such thing as a trustworthy cutout. He gets caught and he’d give you up in a heartbeat.”

“Yeah, huh?”

“Order the VR-1s and plenty of ammo. I’ll see what I can do on the Winchesters and more scabbards. You can place another order with Buffalo Bore in the meantime. Try to get some ordinary full power loads this time in .45 Colt.”

“Ramón, know any crooked supply sergeants?”

“Several, why? Crooked supply sergeant is an oxymoron. Haven’t you ever seen *Kelly’s Heroes*?”

“Must have missed that one. When did it come out?”

“Around 1970.”

“Before my time. Anyway, what I’m looking for is things we’re missing. Things like M15 Willy Pete, M61 grenades, LAW rockets, Javelin Rockets, M84 stun grenades and riot control gas grenades and more Mk 211 MP.”

“Big bucks.”

“We have big bucks to spend and have more every month that passes.”

“Anything else? How about 4 LAV-25s with the Bushmaster chain gun and M240 machine guns? Say 2 of the LAV-25A1, 1 of the LAV-ATs and 1 of the LAV-ADs?”

“Explain.”

“Two improved LAV-25s, one Anti-Tank with TOW Missiles and one Air Defense with Stinger Missiles.”

“You can get those and the other things?”

“I know a lot of crooked supply sergeants. We’re talking BIG money here, maybe a couple of million. I know them by sight and reputation and not by name. The reverse is also true; they know me by sight due to a few small things I scrounged.”

“I didn’t want to put you at risk.”

“No risk but you’d better get started on an underground garage for the LAVs and expand your bunker or build a second.”

“Hank mention the increased patrols?”

“Already implemented. Pairs at irregular half-hour intervals. Shorter intervals, not longer.”

“What do you carry for a backup handgun?”

“A PPK.”

“Try one of the Taurus PT1911Bs. If you like it, carry one in an IWB, small of your back holster. We have plenty and have more on order. If you’re using the 230 grain Gold Dot, try the 200 grain +P Gold Dot. That’s what we have the largest supply of.”

I avoided telling Ginger that the San Diego nuke was number 9 and the Comet number 10. I’d gone back and recounted and her count was right on the money. This was the true source of my worry about what we didn’t have. Our main problem was our lack of ability to bug out. If nothing else, we didn’t have enough semis, tankers and trailers. I decided to just do what we could; and, see what God’s sense of humor would bring us next.

I gathered a general description of TOM and his family from his stories and told Ramón if anyone of that description showed up to send them on their way. TOM was about 5’4, 134 pounds, buzz cuts his entire head and most of his teeth are broken. I think it’s fair to include shortness of breath since he has COPD; and, I suspect he has double or triple rings under his eyes. Seems like he gave his birthday as 3/23/43, so we can add old.

Russia was entering into massive arms deals with the Muslim countries in the Middle East and China was expanding their military armament, especially their naval forces. In the same vein, Russia had several new submarines. Three block I Borei class SSBNs in service and was equipping the block IIs with additional missiles; 20 versus 16

Taken at face value, the fleet of 10 SSBNs wasn't expected to be fully commissioned over an extended period and the Block II carried 20 Bulava SLBMs. All of the 10 Borei class are expected to be commissioned by 2020. My analysis of the Russian expansion showed 3 Block I with 16 tubes plus the 7 class II with 20 tubes. That's $3 \times 16 \times 6$ plus $7 \times 20 \times 6 = 1,128$ SLBM warheads.

China was decommissioning its sole type 92 Xia class SSBN. Their flotilla of Type 94 Jin class stood at 5 carrying up to 12 to 16 JL-2 missiles with the MIRV'd warheads carrying ~10 250kT thermonuclear warheads. That's $5 \times 16 \times 10 = 800$. Where in the name of God did the Chinese come up with 800 warheads? Either they have some empty missile tubes or someone has seriously underestimated the Chinese weapons stockpile. It's worse than I thought.

Worse, Mr. President had negotiated our SSBNs down to 5 warheads per. That's $14 \times 24 \times 5 = 1,680$. If I'm not mistaken, $1,128 + 800 = 1,938 > 1,680$. Ah, unilateral disarmament. And, if he pulls off a gun grab, the US might be successfully invaded. How big of a step would it be for the liberals to become Communists? That small? Crap! Lock and load? Nah, that's what TOM always says. And, I read he gave his firearms collection to his son.

But, back to the VR-1 and the .408 CheyTac ammo; I kind of like the look of the CheyTac USA .408 M300 Precision Engagement Rifle with the A5 McMillan Stock. Now, the ammo choice is \$1,346.40 for the 198 round ammo can with the 350 grain Sierra MatchKing or \$1,406 for the 419 grain solid copper projectile. Two rifles so we'd probably better order 12 cans of each and adjust. Have to call them for the rifle prices including the Elite Iron Suppressor. Then I can fill Ginger in on what this part of the additions cost. I'd better fill her in about my conversation with Ramón.

I know I told her about the stuff I thought we were missing, but Ramón brought up the LAVs. I doubt the 2 million includes the garage or extra ordnance. Talk about a touchy subject, the vehicles and ordnance all have serial numbers! I wonder if we can capitalize this stuff and depreciate it.